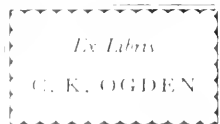




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ABRAHAM FABERT.



MARSHAL FABERT

Portrait of Fabert in the British Museum.

ABRAHAM FABERT

GOVERNOR OF SEDAN : MARSHAL OF FRANCE
THE FIRST WHO ROSE FROM THE RANKS

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

1599—1662

By GEORGE HOOPER

AUTHOR OF

"WATERLOO : THE DOWNFALL OF THE FIRST NAPOLEON," "THE CAMPAIGN OF SEDAN,"
"WELLINGTON," ETC.

"His name a great example stands, to show
How strangely high endeavours may be blessed,
Where Piety and Valour jointly go,"—DRYDEN

With a Portrait

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

WHO was Abraham Fabert, and why should an account of him be written in English?

The biography now offered to the public had this natural origin. Many years ago, while travelling for rest and recreation, the author picked up at an Edinburgh book-stall a copy of the *Vie de Fabert par le Père Barre*, and read it for amusement. Until then he knew no more of Fabert than this—that he was a Marshal of France whose statue he had seen at Metz, that his name figures in the Appendix to Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, and that it was mentioned here and there by other historians. The two little brown volumes of the Canon of St. Geneviève, however, disclosed the character of a man, so different in many respects from that of the French soldiers of his time, that the author was led to push his inquiries farther and deeper; and thus he came to admire, and felt constrained to write out his estimate of the adventures, attainments, and high qualities of this Fabert. Some progress had been made, in hours of leisure, when a new French life of his hero was announced; and then, thinking it would be needless, the work was laid aside. The new Life, by Colonel Bourelly, is full, complete, based on profound researches, a genuine example of exhaustive investigation and conscientious labour; but it is not suitable to the British public. In due time the desire to set forth the merits of the printer's son who became a Marshal, of the brave, faithful, and studious soldier, of the Governor who took his duties to heart, of the wise administrator and enlightened economist, sprang up afresh, and the result of yielding to temptation is contained in the following pages.

The author trusts they will show, contrary to Voltaire's opinion, that there was something "extraordinary" in the man's career besides the fact that he succeeded "solely by his merit," and that he refused the *Cordon Bleu* rather than

forge evidence of noble birth for three generations. He was, indeed, almost an unique figure in a tumultuous and dramatic period; and the sketches of "his times," which began with Henry IV. and ended with the death of Mazarin, are essential as indications of the environment in which he lived. The events and the characters of that sixty-two years have furnished themes for many pens; this humble attempt follows the course of one who was not in the front rank, but who, on that account, is no less worthy of remembrance and honour. Enough; the book must now speak for itself.

G. H.

Kensington, February, 1890.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

IN publishing this Life of Marshal Fabert the nearest relatives of the late George Hooper are actuated by a desire to carry out what they know to have been his wishes.

Shortly before his sudden death in May, 1890, my father had revised the manuscript of this his latest and, as it unhappily proved, his last work, and prepared it for the press. Perhaps some further alterations in the text would have been made by the author before he actually placed it in the printers' hands, but whatever his intentions in this respect may have been, the book must now appear substantially as he left it two years ago. A few obvious and trifling verbal errors have been corrected, and an Index has been added, but no material changes have been made in the work itself. The index has been constructed on the plan of including, so far as possible, only subjects having a direct bearing on Fabert himself, but some departures from this rule have been judged expedient.

The portrait of the Marshal prefixed to the volume is copied by the Autotype Company from a print in the British Museum.

WYNNARD HOOPER.

May, 1892.

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ABRAHAM FABERT.

INTRODUCTION.

ABRAHAM, son of Abraham Fabert, was born at Metz on October 11, 1599. The interest which he inspires is grounded on his exceptional career and character. He came of a family of printers and booksellers; he was renowned as a brave soldier in a period conspicuous for reckless personal valour; he was an able and honest man of business, a disinterested public servant, a statesman whose administrative and economical ideas were in advance of his time; and finally, he rose from the ranks by hard work and sheer merit to the dignity of Marshal of France,—he was, indeed, the first French soldier, not belonging to the noblesse of the sword or the gown, who, to use a modern phrase, found a Marshal's bâton in his knapsack. He did not, like some of the Napoleonic Marshals, start from the lowest rung of the social ladder, but he was without those conventional qualifications, which, in his day, and long after, were regarded as the conditions precedent to the highest promotion; and his sense of honour was so refined that he would not stoop to invent or purchase a pedigree from obliging heralds. That was not a common virtue. Witty Madame Cornuel said of Louis XIV. in his prime, that she did not know why folks thought the King did not love Paris, seeing that he had made such a number of

her burghers Knights of his Orders; and when an Archbishop of Sens, because he knew he was not, and that the statutes required that he should be a noble of three descents, refused the *Cordon Bleu*, St. Simon scornfully exclaimed, "He imitated M. de Fabert. These two stand alone." The others complied with an easy custom winked at by the King. Fabert, like the prelate, was more fastidious. He had his faults, but baseness was not among them; and even with the frailties he had, he may fairly stand as a representative of courage, perseverance, tolerance, industry, and probity, in a selfish, bigoted, and venal age.

His earliest recorded ancestor is a certain Isaiah, an Alsatian, who dwelt in Strasburg and had property in Lorraine, which entitled him to be called seigneur of Xonville, a village near Metz not far from the battle-field of Mars la Tour. He had a son named Mangin, and this Fabert accepted from Charles III., Duke of Lorraine, the post of Master and Director of the Ducal Printing Establishment at Nancy, at a salary of two thousand crowns, high pay for that period. Three facts are known of Mangin, printer to the generous Duke—his marriage at his father's *château* in 1551, his subsequent removal from Nancy to Metz, and his purchase of the castle and lands of Moulins, three miles from the city, to this day the property of his descendants. He is said to have been ennobled by the Duke, but the fact is doubtful. If little is known of the founder of the Fabert family, his son Abraham has had better fortune. He also was a printer; he fought for Henry IV. against the League; aided in the capture of Mars la Tour, then written Malatour, and of Conflans; served many years as "*Maître Echevin*," or High Sheriff of Metz, printed books, and prospered in many ways. When ennobled by Henry, in 1603, he was styled "*commissaire ordinaire de notre Artillerie és gouvernement de Metz, Thoul, Verdun*." "*Reputé yssa de noble race*," he is made and de-

clared to be a "*gentilhomme*" with the title of "*Ecuyer*." He had ten children, three of whom only survived, François, Abraham, and Anne. He may be said to have built up the house on the foundations laid by his father; and it was his services to Henry IV. and to the famous Duke of Epemon, a favourite, but, as St. Simon asserts, never a "*mignon*" of Henry III., which created those opportunities of earning distinction so eagerly and resolutely seized by Abraham the Younger. His father's reputation in Lorraine rested upon the excellence of the works which came from his printing office; works even now coveted by collectors as specimens of typography; but most upon his tact and judgment as an administrator. Thus he was a country squire by virtue of his little seignory outside Metz on the "road to France," a sort of chief Magistrate in the city; a renowned printer, an artillerist, and, as we shall see, an enterprising speculator, who ventured to lease the iron works at Moyoeuvre on the Orne.

Abraham the Younger was born two years before the son of Henry IV., the prince with whom, as Louis XIII., he was destined to have such intimate relations. Richelieu was a youth, still uncertain whether it would be his lot to wear a mitre or a helm, and Mazarin, whom Fabert outlived, had not seen the light. The end of the sixteenth century was, indeed, a point in time marking a new epoch in French history. The desolating wars waged in the name of religion, for social and political ends, had terminated in a compromise. When Henry III., who carefully planned the murder of Henry, Duke of Guise, in the Castle of Blois, fell himself under the blow of an assassin, the Catholic League was avenged, but the stroke of vengeance not only destroyed a hated monarch, it virtually destroyed the League. Henry of Navarre became King, *de jure*, and he soon took the step which made him King, *de facto*. He was duly converted to

the faith of the majority, "Paris was well worth a mass." The greater part of the Catholic noblesse rallied to his white plume, and the rivalry between the old Duke of Mayenne and the young Duke of Guise did the rest. The House of Guise, which so nearly succeeded in capturing the throne of France, fell back into the ranks of courtiers; the House of Bourbon, by capitulation as well as craft and valour, retained its lofty place; and, although the Church, the sects, the great nobles and the lawyers wrestled fiercely with the sovereign power, that power in the end issued from the long and sanguinary conflict absolute and supreme.

Fabert was born when the period of change had just begun. The waves of revolution had not altogether subsided; the disorder in every department of the State was appalling; the hostile social and political forces were still in arms; the financiers and tax-gatherers alone were flourishing; the people were steeped in misery. But a master mind had gained an initial control over the elements of confusion, and there was at least the hope that strength and honesty would bring some of the blessings of tranquility and order. That hope was in a great measure fulfilled by the labours of Henry and Sully, men so nearly of an age, the King being only seven years older than his friend and servant, and so finely tempered, that, although they differed profoundly in character, they could work together effectively to secure objects dear to each—the establishment of order in the administration, the restoration of honesty in the management of the finances, and the organization of France as a great power.

At the end of the sixteenth century they had only taken the initial steps in their arduous enterprise. France had no commerce; no ships; properly speaking, no army. The King's revenue was precarious, for the taxes and treasuries were in the hands of corrupt and plundering officials. The governors of provinces gave themselves airs of independence,

and treated with the monarch. The League was, indeed, subdued, but the embers of that devastating invention of the Guises still smoked; the Huguenots, alarmed and indignant at the King's conversion, wavered between rebellion and obedience; while Austria and Spain—Philip II. had only just ended his long and pernicious career—threw a black shadow, not only over perturbed France, but over Holland, England, and Protestant Germany. It was the business of the shrewd and jovial King and his crafty but honest minister to coerce and conciliate internal opposition; to extinguish debt, relieve the taxpayer by destroying his oppressor, the lawless tax-collector; to create a surplus; and to organize a power which would enable France to take her own line even in the teeth of the Spanish Court and the Holy Roman Empire.

When Henry was assassinated, in 1610, he had gone far towards the accomplishment of this stupendous task. He had made his country a flourishing State; he possessed a vast treasure in the Bastille, where Sully kept watch and ward; he was the head of a fine army, and had a "great design" on foot which was directed, nominally, towards the political and territorial reformation of Europe, but was really devised with intent to enlarge and strengthen the power of France. To use the language of Augustin Thierry, an impartial witness, he desired to preserve France from the danger to which she was exposed by the preponderance of Austria, and "at the same time give France herself a preponderating position by re-constituting Europe on a new principle, that of the independence and equality of States."

He proposed to reduce the then existing States to fifteen, having theoretically equal power. It is a curious fact that at this date, 1890, the number of sovereign states in Europe, excluding Turkey, is just one more,—sixteen; but, of course, neither they, nor their dynamical relations to each other, correspond with the dream of Henry IV.

Metz, at the end of the sixteenth century, had been virtually an "annexe" of France for nearly fifty years. When Maurice of Saxony planned his daring enterprise against the Kaiser, Henry II. became his willing ally, and while Maurice hunted Charles V. from Innsprück, Henry laid hands on Toul, Verdun, and Metz, gaining the last by an adroit stratagem, with the full connivance of the anti-Imperialist party in the city. Charles signed a peace with his astute German antagonist—the peace of Passau, in its day a great Protestant and German victory—and then marched with his whole military force to wrest Metz from the grasp of the French King. Forewarned, Henry threw five thousand men, mostly trained soldiers, but including a band of fighting French nobles, into the place, and had the wit to put at their head Francis, Duke of Guise.

This capable and resolute leader, razing abbeys, monasteries, churches, faubourgs on both banks of the river, expelling the "useless mouths," and making, in other ways, the most of the three months allowed him for preparation, was in ample readiness for battle, when, in the autumn of 1552, Charles sat down before the city. It was so well defended by Guise and his men, that the proud Kaiser, although he was aided by Alva, and the brilliant yet erratic Albert, nick-named "Aleibiades," Markgraf of Baireuth, called by the French "the Marquis of Brandenburg," was compelled by valour, snow, and rain, to withdraw, in deep distress of mind, from the scene of a failure as conspicuous and significant as any in history.

Thus was Henry's appropriation of Metz made good by Francis of Guise. New defences were built, a new city planned, and Metz, says a French author, himself a Messin, "bought the sorrowful privilege of becoming one of the most formidable bulwarks of France by the loss of part of her population, of her monuments, and her commercial resources."

When Fabert was born, the havoc wrought by the siege had long been repaired, although the grand edifices on the left bank were gone for ever. The extent of the city was diminished, but much of its old beauty remained, and the elder Fabert (1610) celebrates its pleasant situation, its spaciousness, its fine bridges and beautiful rivers, its Champ-à-Seille surrounded by arcades, and affording a field for ten thousand men in order of battle, its scores of churches, all surpassed by the towering Cathedral, its pleasant approaches, its gardens, water-mills, quaint walls, and round towers, the abundance of Roman ruins, and the Bridge of the Dead over the Moselle, which led to the city "from the side of France." The ancient square citadel, standing between the rivers, was enclosed by more pretentious works which did not win the approbation of Henry IV.; and the mound-like retrenchments, thrown up by Guise, still rose above the archaic ramparts, some traces of which remained to our day.

There were no fortifications on the left bank under the abrupt hills. The western defences ran along the right bank, and the "road to France," carried on bridges over the Moselle, turned southwards and passed by the stout little château of Moulins, the seigneurie of Fabert's father, before it ran westward by Mars la Tour, where there was also a château which he had helped Henry's troops to snatch from the Leaguers, and so onward to Verdun by routes long familiar to the soldier-student, and nearly identical with those trodden by the Roman Legions, highways repaired by the famous Brunhild, and in several places still bearing her name. Below Metz lay Diedenhof, or Thionville, then, as now again, an imperial city; and above on the Meurthe, Nancy, whence the Duke of Lorraine looked jealously on the French who had deftly appropriated the large slices cut from his Dukedom.

So far as the Messins were concerned, having tried and

failed to govern themselves as burghers of a free city, they, or a party among them, had called in the French King, whose sway they preferred to that of the Emperor, and still more to that of the Bishop. The King gave them a governor and a garrison; but their ancient municipal institutions survived for a century and more, and Metz grew gradually less German and more French. And a fine conquest it was for France. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Messin was famed for its wealth of corn, wine, meat, and fish, its grass-meadows, vineyards, salt-works, minerals, and woods; and the site of its chief city on the road from the west to the east enabled its bluff, valiant, energetic, and industrious inhabitants to draw profit from these great advantages.

They were compounded of many peoples, a result not wonderful in a border city, which had been a great Roman station, the capital of the Frankish Kingdom of Austrasia, a Reichstadt, and free town; and the mixture of races had produced a community with distinctly more liking for the French Monarchy than for the Holy Roman Empire, probably because their pride revolted against the arrogance of the Emperor, and they had not yet tasted the tyranny of the King. Indeed, Henry, in the manifesto which he issued in the spring, when he took the field to aid Maurice, styled himself "Protector of the Liberties of Germany and of its captive Princes," and gave out, as other Frenchmen did after him, that he was under arms to restore the shattered constitution of the Empire, and "secure the privileges and independence of all the members of the Germanic body." Whether the Messins believed him or not, they fell, and remained under his sway long after Maurice had gained that object, and had wrung the Passau Treaty from the sullen Kaiser.

CHAPTER I.

YOUTH OF FABERT.

BORN in a frontier town, or rather an advanced post of France, at a period when war was epidemic, the young Fabert disclosed, at a very early age, his natural bent to arms. His father was a magistrate and a printer, but he also had served, and was nearly as familiar with sword and cannon as he was with type and the printing-press. Moreover, thoroughly loyal alike to Henry and the Duke of Epernon, the elder Fabert was disposed to court and serve, if not to flatter them; and the sworn printer of Metz was as ready to raise troops against the Leaguers of Lorraine, as he was assiduous in producing fine specimens of typography.

The warlike strain in the stout and politic burgher prevailed in the blood of his younger son, and the father unconsciously aided in stimulating the latent instinct. In the first glimpse we have of the boy he is under arms. When he was four years old Henry IV. visited Metz, for the double purpose of remedying a crying civic grievance and of still further loosening the hold of the Lorraine Duke over his coveted Duchy. Two Gascons, Raymond de Comminges and his brother, had defied Governor Epernon, their immediate master, and enraged the people. The King, says Sully, thought that, "if Metz, a city so very lately dismembered from the Empire, should unfortunately happen, in the present conjuncture, to separate itself from France, it would be a difficult matter to recover it."

He further shrewdly argued, that as some opportunity of annexing Lorraine might offer, it would be just as well that a sure King's man should hold the citadel of Metz. So he set out thither in the winter of 1603, "notwithstanding the rigour of the season, which," as Sully remarks, "made the roads very bad for the ladies to travel," and took with him Queen Marie and all his Court.

The Messins, though factious at times, were loyal, and received the King and Queen with great rejoicings, an account of which the elder Fabert composed and printed. Therein, writes Colonel Bourelly, who had seen a copy, is the description of an incident quite in keeping with the spirit of the age. A company of one hundred and twenty children armed with pikes and lances "*fleurdelisé*" paraded before Henry and Marie. Among the tiny warriors, besides his elder brother, François, was Abraham Fabert, then in his fourth year; so that he appeared as a soldier upon a notable occasion which he was not likely to forget. Before he left the city the King, as Sully tells us, received several German Princes, among them a "Marquis of Brandenburg" and the Landgrave of Hesse; he dismissed the troublesome brothers Comminges, and appointed de la Grange, Lord of Montigny, whose name survives in the "lines of Armanvillers," as the King's Lieutenant in Metz, putting at the same time the Lord of Arquien, the brother of Montigny, in command of the citadel. Thus was Metz, if in danger, made secure against "Spain and the Emperor."

Probably the child's father, when he put a pike in his baby fist, thought only of pleasing the monarch, and not at all of any effect which the military parade might produce on his son. A careful parent, bound to hand over his fiefs to François, a man proud of his craft, he hoped to find, for the young Abraham, a career in the Church which would give him employment, position, and learning, so that he

might become a shining ecclesiastic and famous printer. But the boy was obstinately bent on being a soldier, and refused at first to learn Latin or take any interest in typography. He had no distaste for study; on the contrary, he only turned away from such study as seemed likely to land him in the Church, resembling in that respect the British youth who demurred to Latin, lest, as he said, "they should make him a Bishop." François lived to become, like his father, a "*commissaire d'artillerie*" and a Maître Echevin, and he also devoted himself to his native city.

Abraham was faithful to the sword, and could not be induced to bid for the gown or the "soutane." The boy must have noted an incident which made a noise in Metz, when he was in his eleventh year. The King whom he saw as a boy had been slain by an assassin, and all France vibrated at the deed. The energetic Epernon at once dispatched Tilladet, a dashing swordsman, to get possession of the Metz citadel, if he could, for everybody was looking out for himself. The commandant, Arquien, had rushed back to his fortress as soon as he heard that the King had been murdered, thus anticipating Tilladet, who, nevertheless, aided by a treacherous sergeant, endeavoured to surprise the place, did get through an opened postern, but was sharply beaten back and just escaped with his life. As Epernon was in favour, Tilladet could not be punished, neither could Arquien be blamed, but in the end, the stout commandant was posted to Calais, and Epernon's man got the citadel. Not an edifying example for a young lad, yet one which, happily, did him no harm.

At this time, according to the Père Barre, he haunted the garrison exercise ground, acquired a practical knowledge of the company evolutions then in vogue, and the better to attain his object, formed a boy friendship with the son of an officer whose ardour equalled his own. The troops in the

place were still French Guards, the companies, indeed, which Henry had marched hurriedly thither, in 1603, "without waiting for their new uniforms." When their presence delighted the eyes of Fabert, doubtless they shone out in undimmed splendour, for Sully, though frugal, was a man of method, and did not fail to find money for genuine public needs. The Guards were not a bad school in which to study the rudiments of soldiering. He must have daily quitted the newly built paternal mansion, hard by the water-mill in the Petit Sauley, now the Place de Préfecture, erected on ground presented to his father by the city, and have wandered southward to that citadel which, as a military work, found no favour in the experienced eyes of Henry IV.; and probably he had read or heard narrated the details of the great siege which broke the spirit of Charles V.

Visible from the citadel church of St. Pierre le Vieil, and almost within gunshot of the antique round flanking towers, the youthful Fabert may have visited the Château of la Horgne, long since gone to dust, upon the walls of which, as Motley tells us, some jester scrawled the figure of a crab with the words *plus citra* in lieu of the Emperor's proud motto *plus ultra*. Nor would he fail to know that his father's castle of Moulins had itself been besieged, and that warriors, renowned in their day, had slept within its walls. So that if the boy did not become a Latin scholar, he had still the teaching of history or tradition, and the hardy exercise which rendered him able to endure privation and resist fatigue. He was not strong, but he had a tireless spirit, and he never seems to have known fear. Most of all his natural uprightness of mind was strengthened by the example of his father, who managed without reproach, to steer his difficult way.

Little is known about Fabert's boyish education proper; but as he lived in an atmosphere of letters and affairs, and as his father persisted in trying to make him his successor in

the office of sworn printer, the boy must have been much better taught in all ways than the youths of the noblesse, and his studies, though interrupted by his love of arms, must have approximated towards those pursued by the higher ranks of the burghers who recruited the minions of the law. At any rate he acquired enough rudimentary knowledge to give him the power of attaining many accomplishments in after life not common in the French army. Louis, the Dauphin, with all his governors and professors, was hardly better taught than Fabert, and by no means so well schooled as the hero of Rocroi, who, for the time, had an excellent training, under the eye of his severe but long-headed father. At a much earlier date, Bassompierre, who preferred his French to his German patronymic, ceased to attend school and college at seventeen; while the majority of the noblesse served as pages in great households, and got their schooling, such as it was, as best they could. They were taught to fence, ride, dance, and play on the lute or some other instrument, and in their teens they went "to the wars" as cadets or volunteers. They were attached to some regular regiment, *vieux corps*, or, like Ben Jonson, they served in the Low Countries, where death, wounds, or experience could always be had.

It is not written that Fabert ever learned to dance, but he certainly did become, at an early age, a proficient in drill and discipline, much to the chagrin of his sire; and displayed that tendency towards the practical and scientific side of his chosen profession—chemistry, mathematics, engineering—which in after life made him conspicuous. He was taught, or taught himself, surveying and military draughtmanship, and shrank from no kind of toil which seemed likely to fit him out for the accurate performance of the duties he undertook. Naturally, his first essays in these directions were rudimentary and boyish, but they revealed the true nature

of his character, which, first and last, was as remarkable for industry, energy, self-devotion and thoroughness as it was for uprightness and loyalty. The boy started with a high conception of Duty, in a corrupt age, and the man, to his death-bed, was faithful to a principle of action which is the salt of States. The elder Fabert, Maitre Echevin in 1610, steadfastly pursuing his purpose to make his son a printer, secured for him the reversion of his office, and even placed his name on the title page of several volumes. But his persistence availed him nothing, and it is probable that the youth himself very rarely, if at all, though he may have learned to set up type, exercised his father's honourable craft. Three years afterwards, in 1613, an event occurred in Metz which decided the long-pending family dispute.

The Governor of Metz and the Messin was that Jean Louis de Nogaret, Duke of Epernon, who won an extravagant eulogy from St. Simon, and bitter censure from Sully. The famous memoir-writer describes the fiery Gascon as "grand and magnanimous," and speaks of his "uprightness and firmness, and his invincible attachment to the State and his King." Whereas Sully, in portraying a man whom he detested, can use no phrases weaker than unconquerable pride, insolence, or rather natural ferocity," adding that "he hated the King (Henry IV.) because he hated the world; and, without doubt, there were moments when he was not well-satisfied with himself." St. Simon admired him because he strained to the uttermost the privileges of a noble and a Duke; and Sully, who had successfully opposed his exactions before Fabert was born, and detested his arrogance, blackened his name, because he was not sufficiently obedient to Henry, and had aided Marie de Médicis to get rid of Sully.

The conduct of Epernon after the King's assassination is characteristic of the noble who never bated one jot of his

dignity as *grand seigneur*, perhaps because he had some doubt whether his extraction was on a level with that of his rivals. "He had no birth," says his admirer St. Simon; but he always behaved as if he had descended from Charlemagne. Resolved that Marie de Médicis should be Regent, he entered the Parlement of Paris, and demanded that a formal declaration of her Regency should be made that very day. "My sword," he said, "is still in its sheath, but it will be drawn if that title which, in the order of nature and justice is her due, is not at once accorded." And it was done almost before the corpse of Henry had grown cold. The Queen-mother reigned, but the Guises, Epernons, Condés, Nemours, and Longuevilles governed, until they were eclipsed by the Italian Concinis, husband and wife, whose grasping rule was only tempered by the influence of the legal fraternities. It was a perpetual scramble for places, pensions, gifts; and Sully was driven out of the Council, and into retirement, in order that the Queen-mother and the noblesse, without restraint, might appropriate the millions of treasure hoarded in the Bastile.

Epernon, who was Colonel-General of the Infantry, Knight of the Saint Esprit and the Garter, who held many governments—Guienne, Metz, Provence, Boulonois, Saintonge, Angoulmois—easily prevailed on the Regent to grant the reversion of the Messin to his second son Bernard, then Marquis, afterwards Duke of la Valette. He was a somewhat narrow-minded and hot-tempered young man, with the brusque independence, but without the real ability possessed by his inflexible and haughty sire. His elder brother, Henry, "the least loved, was unfortunate all his life," and his junior Louis, famous in his day as the soldier-cardinal La Valette, became one of the most devoted friends of another Cardinal whose name, Richelieu, stands for that of his age. With all these Nogarets, who had various titles, governments,

and high commands, except Henry, the boy Fabert was destined to have more or less intimate relations in later days. So that, for him, the coming of father and son to Metz, in 1613, was a great event in his life; for it made him give at once a practical proof that he was not to be led or driven from his fixed resolve to seek employment and distinction in a military career.

To the bright and pleasant city on the Moselle came the puissant Duke and his son Bernard, in the summer of 1613. Forewarned of their advent, the Maître Echevin and his colleagues, as was the custom then and now, made great preparations for their reception. A military show was the natural outcome of the spirit of a time when, as Regnier sang—

Le soldat aujourd'hui ne resre que la guerre,

and the burghers of Metz formed a company out of their boys who were between ten and fifteen. They were dressed in the showy La Valette colours,—white pourpoints, red breeches, and green stockings,—and they were commanded by the young Fabert, now rising fourteen. He bore himself so much like a soldier, and manœuvred his company so well, that the Duke of Epemon called him up, praised him, and from that moment became his patron. Some species of firework, also, made by the boy chemist, pleased the Governor, to whom he was thenceforth devoted; and a few weeks later, Abraham the younger, against his father's wish, entered as a cadet in the Gardes Françaises. It is to their credit that, although in this extremity the boy had to invoke the aid of the King's Lieutenant to attain his end, the father and son did not quarrel, but remained then and ever afterwards fast and solid friends. Thus Fabert, before he completed his fourteenth year, became a private soldier. Now, the status of a cadet volunteer, unless he were a youth of high rank, did not differ from that of an enlisted recruit. He received in

some cases no pay, or ordinary pay, or what was called full pay (*la haute paye*). Fabert came in the second category. He was so young that his captain, at first, desired to spare him night duty, but yielded to the lad's importunities, and allowed him to go the rounds with an older comrade. What he aimed at above all things was to learn his profession and to live on his pay. When the Guards were recalled from Metz to Paris, he marched with them. Quartered in the capital, he fulfilled his duties with exactitude, and pursued his studies with unflagging zeal. He taught himself from books, at least the rudiments of geometry, fortification and drawing. In addition, he read history, applied himself to the acquisition of German, Spanish, Italian and Flemish, and was always eager for a knowledge of geography, which, he was wont to say, was as necessary to an officer as his arms were to the soldier.

In that day, when, even among the officers, learning was despised, such fervid industry alone marked him out as an exception. A score of years later, the Marquis of Cramail, at a critical moment, addressed the *arrière ban*, all gentlemen, imploring them not to ride away from the field, the effect of his eloquence was destroyed at once, when some one cried out—"Why listen to him, he has written a book!" A noble said to a contemporary poet, "I mend my pen with my sword." "Then I am no longer astonished," was the prompt retort, "that you should write so badly." We can easily imagine, then, how the student cadet in so punctilious a corps as the Guards, should have had to study almost in secret. That he persevered is indubitable, and also that he did so without neglecting the least of his duties as a private; so determined was he to master all the branches of his profession, from the simplest to the most complex. He served five years in the ranks, enduring discomforts and privations compared with which those of a soldier of our day are less

than nothing; but for him they were fruitful years, because they enabled him to lay, sure and deep, the foundations of his brilliant and dutiful career.

Nor did Epernon forget him. When he had entered his nineteenth year, the Duke gave him the post of ensign in the famous old regiment called "Piedmont." Raised originally in Italy from the bands of Giovanni dei Medici, bearing his colours, which were black with a white cross, they were notable for dashing as well as steadfast valour. Unluckily, Fabert did not remain long in this popular corps. To show why he left it we must try to sketch the kind of world into which he had been plunged, or rather had plunged himself, and thus connect him with the stirring events which quickly proved how much France had lost when the master hand of Henry of Navarre was withdrawn.

CHAPTER II.

THE FRANCE OF FABERT'S YOUTH.

THE change of scene from the smiling valley of the bright Moselle to the brilliant city on the banks of the turbid Seine, brought Fabert into the very heart of the political strife which had been raging since the murder of Henry, and the almost indescribable disorder prevailing throughout society. At Metz he only heard of the turbulence faintly shadowed in the enterprise of du Tilladet in 1610. At Paris he was face to face with the men who had changed the orderly realm of Henry into an arena, where the nobles not only fought for power, but rivalled the financiers in scheming for public plunder; where the lawyers were daily intent on aggrandizing their offices and their political position in the State; and where the multitude were at the mercy of every man who possessed, or could obtain the show of authority. Few more complete contrasts exist in history, than that between the condition of France during the ten years which followed the final triumphs of Henry, and the next decade. It was a transition from the relative security and order of a cultivated territory to the absolute peril and waste of a jungle.

In 1599, the year of Fabert's birth, the Governors, and in general all the great men (*les grands*) had pushed their licentious audacity, says Forbonnais, so far that, of their own authority, they levied contributions on the people. The Duke of Epernon was a conspicuous offender in the provinces under

his rule, and the energy with which Sully, backed by Henry, repressed that potent seigneur, in common with many more, accounts for their antagonism to the honest minister. The same able author, writing of 1603, four years after these drastic measures had been applied, says matters had come to this pass among the people who were *taillable*, that "he who grew rich dared not spend until he became sufficiently wealthy to pay nothing;" that is, until he bought a place or a seignury, or in some way wedged himself into the privileged classes—a most peculiar and almost unintelligible condition of society, even when so greatly reformed by Sully, but admirable in contrast to that which followed. Henry and his minister exacted obedience, no doubt, but they gave security and order in return. Mischiefs and wrongs abounded, but the greater ones were restrained, and the lesser protected in some sort, and effectually for that age, from oppression not inflicted by due course of law.

At the end of the sixteenth century, a Duke of Mercœur, a Guise, who affected the style and title of prince, was able with impunity to rush into the house of the Avocat-général Servin, threaten him with death, and even try to slay him, for no other reason than that, pleading before President Achille de Harlay, the man who bearded the Duke of Guise on the Day of Barricades, he had declared that no one, unless of the blood royal, was entitled to be called prince. A Vaudemont, another Guise, whose assumption of a title which soon became common, was tolerated, could only at a later period carry his pretensions so far as to refuse to sit down at the King's table, because he would not do so in company with the King's illegitimate son, Cæsar, Duke of Vendôme. The Count of Soissons left Paris in order that he might not be present at the ill-omened coronation of Marie de Médicis, and his reason was that there were not more rows of *fleurs de lys* on the Queen's robe than there were on that of Mademoiselle de

Vendôme. When the great Henry lay in his grave, Epernon, moved by what Sully called his "natural ferocity," beat Corneillan, the gate-keeper of the Louvre, because, obeying the Court order, he would not allow the proud Duke to drive into the court-yard; but even in the days of Marie, the base action of Epernon was condemned by his own class, if he had a class, and did not in his own opinion stand alone.

Not that the tranquil years which followed the peace of Vervins and the little war with the Duke of Savoy were exempt from some kinds of disorder or absolutely free from corruption. The nobles, or some of them, were always conspiring to regain, in full, their lost authority; the "gentlemen" of all shades, defying the edicts, slew each other in duels, so-called, at the rate of four or five hundred a year; and the financiers, even under Sully, who sometimes had to bribe, found it very practicable to grow rich. It was during this period that Regnier wrote his earlier satires; in one he says that the noblesse were driving post-haste to the Poor House (*la noblesse courre en poste a l'Hôtel-Dieu*), and in another, that if from a contractor you would become a prince,

*Chacun en sa faveur mettra son espérance,
Mille valets souz toy désoleront la France.*

But, although offices were purchasable and many of them hereditary, some by right of annual payments, others by usage or favours; although taxes, direct and indirect, fell heavily on the unprivileged; although that most strange of institutions, an internal customs line, and a host of tolls and imposts, harassed and restricted the home as well as the foreign trade, nevertheless, and despite many errors, as we should call them, Henry and Sully did effect immense reforms, so that when the King was cut off in his prime, he left behind him a France far more flourishing and prosperous than she had ever been before.

How swift the transformation ! No sooner had the corpse of Henry been entombed in St. Denis, than the great nobles hastened to the Court of the Regent, scenting their prey from afar. The old Leaguers returned to office, and the swarm of money-lenders rejoiced at the prospect of fat contracts, and fresh fields wherein they might exercise the art and mystery of extortion. Factions began to form for battle, and their chiefs to scramble for grants and governments. King Henry, say the philosophers, restored the principle of monarchy, but when he died, the monarchy itself was in danger, and France ran the risk of becoming a satellite of Spain and the Empire.

Marie de Médicis was a woman of boundless self-conceit, who had none of the abilities of her house, except a certain art of weak dissimulation ; but had she been the astute Catherine or the Reine Blanche herself, she would have found it a hard task to assert and maintain control over the proud, daring, and unscrupulous men who, having lost a master, used the welcome freedom to aggrandize themselves. The haughty dictation of Epernon in the Parlement, and the insolence of Bassompierre towards Sully, and the pretensions of Condé, were really the symbols of the new time. The Grandees intended to rule the Court and divide France among them, and all intended to plunder the treasury. They thirsted for the hoards which the thrifty Henry had placed in the vaults of the Bastile ; Sully the unyielding stood in the way, and he was therefore promptly dismissed. They were eager to restore that kind of account-keeping which leaves no inconvenient traces, and reduces the responsibility of the accountants to a minimum, while it raises their liberty or licence to a maximum.

Thus at a stroke, the admirable system devised to protect the tax-payers, and guard the revenue from malversation, was destroyed, in order that the hunger of needy and greedy applicants for favours might be satisfied. The Count of

Soissons, Guise, Epernon, Bellegarde, Condé, were bought by the Regent and her ministers, or rather, a vain attempt was made to allay their opposition, for they took the gold and the places and went on their way, quarrelling among themselves and caballing against the Queen-mother, who squandered on them the treasures of the State. It may be said, indeed, of the Grandees that they seemed bent on showing the world that, in the main, they were not an aristocracy, but only a noblesse, ready enough to die in single combat or on the battle-field, but equally ready to commit deeds which can only be defined as mean and even dastardly. Many were very poor, and all, even the best, were intoxicated with pride of birth and blood, which in their estimation set them absolutely apart from other men. On no other supposition can one account for their incessant demands for public money, and for acts which should have sent them to the galleys.

A Duke of Epernon, when one of the Guards, having killed a comrade in a brawl, was arrested by the civil authority, broke into the Abbaye prison and took him out. An Archbishop of Bordeaux forced a prison and rescued a felon condemned to die. No punishment was inflicted on either. A Duke of Nevers, one of the Gonzagas, finding that a State treasurer used his authority to obstruct the levying of taxes by the Duke, then in revolt, caused him to be carried off, dressed him in rags, and paraded him on an ass, throughout the Rhételois. The Chancellor of Guise slew the Baron of Lux at midday in the Rue St. Honoré, killing him before he had even time to draw his sword; and the records of duelling show that such deeds were not uncommon, and that fair play was the exception, not the rule, among these "gentlemen" and nobles. Henry IV., speaking of the Guise family, two of whom had just committed base actions, wrote to Sully, "I must tell you that the best of the whole race is worth but little;" and when Lux was murdered, Bassompierre relates

how Queen Marie exclaimed, "These are the tricks of the family. It is a copy of St. Paul," meaning the slaying of Antony of St. Paul, one of his favourite officers, by Charles, Duke of Guise. But examples in abundance might be cited to show that the tricks were not confined to "the family."

As the dignity and authority of the Crown were abased and contemned, and as the rigid administration of the late reign, based on honest book-keeping, was invaded and replaced by indiscriminate corruption and profligacy, so the foreign policy of Henry was reversed. Within twelve months of his violent death the Queen and her ministers had signed a defensive treaty with Spain, and decided that Louis should marry Anne, and Don Philip, afterwards Philip IV., should marry Henry's eldest daughter, Elizabeth of France. The object aimed at was the alliance of the Catholic Powers. Sully's financial contracts were broken; Henry's treaties were set aside, and his pledges were not redeemed. The great public works, designed to promote agriculture, trade, commerce, and manufactures, were abandoned; imports, taxes, levies increased; and the inevitable consequence was discontent and exasperation, alike among the plunderers and the plundered.

The fanatic ultramontane faction which sought to set the Church above the State, or rather to absorb the State in the Church, lifted its head once more, and a Cardinal du Perron could say audaciously that "the Kings of the earth should lick the dust from the feet of the Church, and submit themselves to her in the person of the Pope." On all sides the State seemed rushing down to anarchy at headlong speed. Neither the Parlement, which was aggressive, nor the States-General, which were energetic but divided, nor the nobles, who were always prompt to draw the sword, could arrest the downward course of the curious compound of weakness, duplicity and profligacy, which called itself a government.

On two occasions the Dukes were actually paid large sums in addition to what they wrung from the community, to defray the expenses of rebellion.

In the background were the Queen's favourites, the Florentines, Concino and his wife, both publicly hated and dreaded: the man because he was insatiable, brutal and unscrupulous, a Marquis by purchase, which was not uncommon, a Maréchal by the favour of his besotted mistress, although he had never seen a battle, which was unique; the woman because she, being superior in force of character and intellect, not only held sway over Marie, but took bribes with both hands from all parties and every Power. Still further from the public stage was the boy King, neglected, almost a prisoner, left to the care and the teaching of underlings, and sedulously kept aloof from that early familiarity with statesmen and State business so needful to one who is born to rule.

The young Fabert still carried a halbert in the ranks of the Gardes Françaises when Condé was imprisoned, when the Dukes revolted, and when Concino, Maréchal d'Ancre, was assassinated or killed as he entered the Louvre, and Louis was able to exclaim, "Now I am King." He had lived in dread and restraint, and whether with or against the youth's consent, the pistol shots were fired on the 24th of March, 1617. Whether Vitry and his comrades murdered the Maréchal, or slew him because he resisted the King's order for his arrest, certain it is that the whole public applauded the deed, and that the Parisian populace, as usual, exercised its ferocity upon the helpless corpse, and pillaged the house of the abhorred foreigner.

Luynes, the King's favourite, and contriver of the plot which ended in a dark tragedy, became the King's minister. Marie, who had been and was a selfish, unnatural mother, was banished there and then to Blois. The revolted nobles,

thinking their time had come, instantly laid down their arms and flocked back to Paris. The Duke of Mayenne, the son of the old Leaguer, who at least kept his compacts, was at that moment besieged in Soissons by the royal troops. An accomplished officer, Fontenai-Mareuil, who has left such instructive Memoirs, was engaged in the trenches, preparing for an assault, when from the bastion St. Mark a loud voice cried out through the darkness: "Gentlemen, withdraw. The war is over. The Maréchal d'Ancre, your master, is dead, the King, our master, has caused him to be slain." The news had been sent to Mayenne by the Cardinal of Guise, whose messenger got through the besiegers' lines before authentic information reached the camp. But the next day Mayenne sent the keys of Soissons to the King. It was the same everywhere, the rebellion collapsed at once.

When the Queen had driven over the Pont Neuf on her way to the sinister castle on the Loire with all her Court, having in her train a certain Bishop of Luçon, already a distinguished, and destined to be a famous man, Louis removed to Vincennes, and thither went the brutal Mayenne, the self-seeking Vendôme, the quarrelsome Nevers, and the cautious Longueville. Guise, and Bouillon, the restless intriguer, were disbanding their levies; Epernon had not yet decided on his course at this juncture, but when he did decide he rode into Paris from Etampes, and up to the Louvre at the head of five hundred gentlemen. "I have reigned seven years!" was the exclamation of the mother, who wept bitterly over the loss of power, and it was only when that fatal period, which she called her reign, ceased, that in any sense did the reign of the Son begin. It was an ominous dawn, blood-red, but quite in harmony with the sanguinary customs of the time.

Fabert, always thoughtful, must have meditated much on these tragic events, as he mounted guard at the Louvre or

the Arsenal, or bent over his books in solitude; and they may have helped to inspire him with that horror of Courts which he felt to the end of his life, and which made him, in his later days, resist the temptations of Madame de Sévigné's *grand solitaire* of Port Royal, the austere Arnauld of Andilly, who survived Fabert, and in his old age went to the Court of Louis XIV., not yet the "Grand Monarque," but on the road to that equivocal eminence.

Indeed, these events, and some which followed, had an evil influence on Fabert's fortunes. For he had not held his commission a year in the Regiment of Piedmont when Queen Marie, aided by Epernon and his sons, escaped from the Castle of Blois, fled direct to the gloomy towers of Loches, and was escorted thence to Angoulême. Although few nobles joined her standard, and the Protestants held aloof, she and her adherents were yet strong enough to obtain a peace which, in some measure, restored her at least to liberty, and placed her once more in a condition to contend for power.

Now, while the struggle remained in suspense, the La Valette faction raised regiments, and the post of captain in one of these bands was given to Fabert. It was stipulated, in the arrangement negotiated by Richelieu, still only Bishop of Luçon, that no mischief should befall any one who had taken up arms for the Queen. Fabert, therefore, returned to his former regiment, Piedmont, but as Marie was dissatisfied with her state, and as the Grandees were eager to overthrow Luynes, a fresh civil war broke out, which ended in the disastrous rout of the rebels. In due course came a new treaty, but it did not protect men who, like Fabert, had again joined the party of Epernon. Nevertheless the Duke, as Colonel-General of the Infantry, used his power, and reinstated Fabert as ensign in Piedmont. But when the young soldier proposed to purchase a captaincy in Normandy, another old regiment, Luynes, using the name of the King, insolently said

that Fabert was not handsome enough to be a captain in an old corps. The language is attributed to Louis, but it evidently came from Luynes, who, hating much the adherents of the Queen-mother, hated still more the clients of the proud and enterprising Colonel-General of the Infantry. The aspirant for glory was, therefore, destined to remain some years longer in a subaltern post; but before describing his brilliant career as a soldier, it will be proper to sketch briefly the political condition of France, and define succinctly the real questions at issue.

There were three great political currents each striving to obtain the mastery. Foremost came the absolute monarchy, next the *Grandeess*, thirdly the *Tiers Etat*. A minute analysis would show that at no one moment could strictly-defined boundaries be drawn between these several powers. The monarchy, for example, drew strength not only from fact, tradition, and popular reverence for kingship, not always or often synonymous with respect for kings, but from its two rivals. The *Grandeess*, again, though pursuing a common object, and hoping to restore or set up what has been called a bastard feudalism, were divided among themselves, and gave support to the King or drew their swords against him as it seemed politic at the moment. In like manner the Third Estate was in all three camps, many of its delegates to the States-General, and these not the least enlightened, being themselves nobles. Perhaps it should be said that there was a fourth party—the Protestants. They may be so classed, but among them were some of the most weighty *Grandeess*, like Bouillon, Sully and Rohan, and some of the foremost lawyers and gentlemen. The Church, though frequently in opposition, and divided between Gallicans and Ultramontanes, was in effect a buttress of the monarchy, and despite all its pretensions like those of Perron, and successes like those of the Jesuits, was never in a position to strike out for itself.

The monarchy had the enormous advantage of being single, permanent, and the possessor of force, so that it only required moderate strength of direction to make its will prevail; and it was further its good fortune that neither of the other two great parties had such legal or even traditional rights as might have enabled them together or separately to fight the battle on relatively equal terms.

The Grandees may almost be set aside, seeing that they never had the remotest chance of establishing the species of feudal federalism, tempered by the chairmanship of a permanent and subservient head called a King, at which they seemed to aim. They were stupidly selfish. Writing of them in 1617, Henry of Rohan, one of the ablest and most honest men then living, said, "Every one wishes to have the command of an army, or a province, without regard to his own merits, but solely because his neighbour or equal has obtained such a post. If he does not get one he is malcontent, and wants to set his foot on the throat of his master." Rohan, even when in revolt on behalf of his fellow Protestants, was a monarchist, and always what he called himself, *bon François*. "For the most part," he justly said, "those who serve the King deserve to serve him in their own way and not in his." The public, the burghers, and even the peasants, saw this as clearly as Rohan, and after the advent of Henry IV. never thronged to the rebel flags of the Grandees; well knowing that their little fingers, as engines of oppression, extortion, and cruelty, were thicker than the loins of the King. The Grandees, including some princes of the blood, were able to kill, plunder, and destroy; they could found nothing. The Venetian ambassador at the Court of Louis saw that Condé had not stuff enough in his character to make a successful leader of faction. "There are only two princes," he wrote, "who in this reign could produce a serious revolt, Monsieur and the Count of Soissons"—the first being

that brother of Louis who was afterwards the Duke of Orleans, then a child; and the second the grandson of that heroic Condé who was murdered in cold blood on the field of Jarnac. The *Grandeess* were, indeed, a survival, but they died hard, and were not effectually quelled until Mazarin finally triumphed in the minority of Louis XIV. It was the misfortune of Fabert, yet an inevitable misfortune in those days, that his patron and friend was one of these ambitious and arrogant persons, the Duke of Epemon; but we shall see that without proving ungrateful, he soon became the servant of the King, or rather, as he conceived it, the dutiful servant of France.

The only possible source of an effective control over the Monarchy lay in the *Parlement* and the *States-General*. Many writers have argued that out of one or both of these might have grown up a constitutional body similar to that which had attained so much power in England. They arrive at this belief by overlooking the fact that the political and social conditions in the two countries were wholly dissimilar. There never was a French institution analogous to the English Parliament. The "*Parlement*," so called, was a Company of Magistrates, empowered to decide causes and perform administrative acts. It had the right of remonstrance but never the right of veto, and the monarch could always, if he thought fit, enforce the registration of an edict in a "*bed of justice*." "*The Parlement*" was, in fact, a collection of placemen, in nowise representative; and after the invention of the "*Paulette*," a nickname derived from that of Charles Paulet, the ingenious financier who devised the annual payment—it was an assembly of hereditary placemen. It could oppose and denounce, but never refuse to register "*money bills*," as we may call them, if the King persisted in having his way. The "*Parlement*" was a great power in the State, but it was never a House of Commons.

Neither was the States-General a Parliament in the English sense. That body was intermittent, and at the most a council of advice ; but it was representative, and therein lay its strength. The States were weakened by a division into Orders, a defect which might have been repaired ; but they had "not the power of the purse ;" their assent was not really necessary to any act ; and consequently they could enforce nothing, and arrest nothing by dint of the rigid observance of constitutional law or usage.

The inherent weakness of the States-General became evident when they were brought into collision with the Crown, and never more so than in the assembly held at Paris in 1614, the last before that summoned in 1789. But the memory of it is deservedly cherished because a spirit was displayed and words were spoken which foreshadowed the still distant Revolution. Tavaron said that the Romans had been expelled because they levied excessive tributes, and a similar event might spring from a like cause. When De Mesme compared the three Orders to brothers, calling the Church the eldest, the Noblesse the second-born, and the Tiers the youngest, and added that the cadets often restored a family ruined by the elders, the nobles were indignant, and their spokesman said, "the Deputies of the Tiers do not know their place when they compare themselves to us," while the more fiery spirits exclaimed, that there was no more brotherhood between the noble and the roturier than there was between the master and his valet. The Nobles fell away when the Third Estate, denouncing certain pernicious doctrines, declared, in effect, that the State is superior to the Church ; and a rhyme of that day addressing the clergy and noblesse, said that since they had so badly maintained the sovereign power—

Il faut que vos cadets deviennent vos aînés.

It was such discord that destroyed the only chances which

the States had of becoming a strong constitutional check upon the Crown ; but the discord had its roots in the social condition of France, and grew as naturally from them as the tree from the seed. The Parlement remained when the States-General disappeared, but lacked the essential attribute which was the strength of the States—it was a co-optative corporation and not a great body of national representatives, and its sole weapon of attack and defence was the right of remonstrance.

Outside the Nobles and the Third Estate were the Protestants. Their position had this peculiarity—they were sufficiently numerous and strong to make their active support of great importance to the monarchy, and they were in such danger from the dominant Church that their policy tended constantly towards aggressive measures undertaken in self-defence or in anticipation of attack. In their ranks were men of all classes and all races in France. And they had substantial grievances which could only have been removed by a liberal interpretation of the Edict of Nantes. But the chief point to be noted at present is that they desired to establish themselves as a species of independent body within the State. Such a design has been attributed to that Viscount of Turenne who, by his marriage with the heiress of the house of De la Marck, became Duke of Bouillon and the possessor of sovereign rights in the Principality of Sedan ; and the accusation was renewed, but this time directed against Henry of Rohan, in 1611.

The great scheme of organization then devised, and soon developed, covered with its “circles” a belt of country stretching from Rochelle to the Western Alps, with its head-quarters on the sea and its strongest contingent in the fortresses and great municipalities of Languedoc and Provence. The confederacy, though weak in the centre, was powerful at the extremities ; but while the Protestants, or rather a large number among them, were undoubtedly

bent on obtaining something like a religious republic, it may be reasonably doubted whether, in the reign of Louis XIII., the leaders intended to do more than set up a formidable opposition, based on adequate securities, as a protective measure to preserve their liberties from clerical encroachment. Yet the line taken by the fanatics implied the greater project, and the moderates, like Sully and Mornay, the ardent yet sagacious defenders of freedom of conscience, like Rohan, were set aside or compelled to join the combative section. Thus the opportunities of effecting a peaceful settlement were lost, and the Crown was obliged to draw the sword in order to uphold the unity of the Realm. The time came when the Protestants were more dangerous to the monarchy than either the Nobles or the Third Estate, and civil war became inevitable.

It was in the midst of this confused conflict of castes, sects, and parties, which shook the whole fabric of society, that Fabert began his active career as a soldier. He was, at first, a very humble actor in a stormy drama; and he attained his later eminence by an unfaltering devotion to what he considered his duty as a servant of the King and the State, and by incessant labour to acquire every kind of knowledge which would enable him to perform it without stint, no matter how exacting its demands might be. That is the moral of his life.

CHAPTER III.

FABERT'S EARLY TROUBLES.

THE French, as a nation, remained Catholic, yet not Papist, a fact proved by the defeat of the League and the conversion of the King, who, although obliged to favour the Jesuits, was never an Ultramontane. His son, Louis, was a devout Catholic, but as he grew in years, like his father, he never permitted his religion to govern his policy, not even when he was without the support of a man of genius who had accidentally become a priest and a Cardinal. But at the outset of his reign he found himself compelled to wage war on the Protestants, not so much because they were Protestants, as because they aspired to raise the spiritual above the secular arm; and because it is the instinct of any central and accredited supreme Power, whether absolute, limited, or democratic, to quell resistance and even punish defiance.

The Protestants were not merely a politico-religious party, they were a widely spread and armed organization, supported by fortresses like Rochelle, St. Jean d'Angely, Montauban, Montpellier, and the mountain strongholds of the Cevennes. How strong they were may be inferred from the fact that the royal government was occupied more or less for ten years in completing their subjection; and it was a misfortune for France that they sought security for their franchises more by advancing unreasonable pretensions and

committing acts of hostility, than by supporting the King. If, at the outset of the Thirty Years' War, their statesman-like and sagacious leader had prevailed over the preachers and enthusiasts, it is not improbable that the reformed religion would have attained a position which would have rendered it impolitic, even for a Louis XIV., to cancel the Edict of Nantes. In 1621, the general assembly at Rochelle broke openly with the government, and sounded a note of defiance. The old Duke of Bouillon, in his castle of Sedan, and Lesdiguières, who was a sort of king in Dauphiny, would have nothing to do with their projects; but Rohan, although he saw the peril, if not the folly of the enterprise, was faithful to the cause, and carried with him his brother Soubise, and La Tremouille, and Châtillon, the grandson of Coligny. Even the moment chosen for a rupture was unhappy, for the King had just dispersed a formidable cabal headed by the Queen-mother and the Grandees, and had an army on foot; while the Ultra-Catholics eagerly welcomed the chance of falling upon their old foes. It may have been the interest of Luynes to stimulate the war, but it was the intractable and over-bearing party among the Protestants who forced the King to draw the sword.

Fabert was still a subaltern when Louis XIII. marched against the Calvinists, in 1621. In the preceding year he had personally reduced the Béarnais, and had annexed Béarn and Navarre to the Crown of France; but aroused by their governor, La Force, the Huguenots had risen once more, and the Duke of Epemon was ordered to quell the insurrection. He took with him Ensign Fabert, who, when the people, naturally afraid of the Duke, deserted their homes, won his first laurels by convincing them that submission would ensure safety, and made good his word. This *début* was diplomatic rather than military, but it brought out a useful quality, and the Duke began to value him as something more than a

resolute and devoted follower. At that time the King was besieging the intrepid Soubise in St. Jean d'Angely, "the bulwark of Rochelle." The Huguenot chief made so stout a resistance that Epernon was called up to the camp. With him came Fabert, or rather with his second son, the Duke of la Valette; and both were so active and forward that the Duke was wounded in the ankle. Puysegur says, with some malice, that the Duke had come only to witness the descent into the ditch. At the last moment, and to evade an assault, Soubise surrendered on good terms, as things went in those days. No persons were punished or detained, and the citizens preserved unimpaired "liberty of conscience and worship," but no safeguards; for the municipal privileges of the city were abolished, and the outworks and walls were thrown down.

King Louis now resolved, or was made to resolve, for he was barely twenty years old, that the Huguenots throughout the whole south should be reduced to obedience. It was a contest for mastery envenomed by the zealots on each side. The favourite, Luynes, still flourished; he had caused his brother Cadenet to be made Duke of Chaulnes, and his brother Brantes to marry an heiress, and thus become Duke of Luxembourg; while he himself took from the hand of the King the title of Duke, and above all the coveted sword of the Constable. The old Dauphiny hero, Lesdiguières—his title was "Marshal-General of the Camps and Armies of his Majesty"—joined the expedition, and in its wake rode a goodly company of priests, the Père Joseph, afterwards famous as *Son Eminence Grise*, being among them. The Queen-mother also followed the camp and looked on at the sieging, for it is recorded by Arnould d'Andilly that, at the siege of Clérac, her Majesty and the whole Court "had the pleasure of seeing, from a hillock, nine thousand cannon-shots fired from the batteries in a single day." Clérac surrendered, and Louis marched on to Montauban.

During this period of the painful and disastrous campaign, Fabert had been employed in front of Rochelle. He rode thither with the Duke of Epemon and a weak detachment of the army; and was sent forward to reconnoitre the place, a proof that his judgment, as well as his daring and deftness, had begun to be appreciated. He found the fortress strong, well-provided, and practically unassailable from the land side, while on the sea front the daring mariners kept the waterways open. He reported that the only useful mode of proceeding would be by blockade, and his advice was adopted by the Duke. Yet there were repeated skirmishes, the usual foolish as well as cruel devastation of the country by fire, and one or more outworks were stormed. The summer was spent in restricting the defenders to the body of the place, and in preparing to construct a certain Fort Louis among the marshes. It was built and garrisoned by Pierre Arnauld, *Mestre-de-Camp*, that is, Colonel of "Champagne," a soldier who "studied the discipline of the Romans," invented arms, trained his men to carry the pick and spade as part of their equipment, and made "Champagne" renowned for steadiness and hardihood. With 20,000 such men he believed that he could go anywhere and do anything. To distinguish him from the other Arnaulds, the stout veteran was called "Arnauld of the Fort." He was the uncle of Robert Arnauld of Andilly, and died soon afterwards from the miasma of the Rochelle marshes.

While Fabert was engaged in irksome duties before Rochelle, the war had rolled away to the south and the King and his Constable had been brought to a stand before the strong city of Montauban. For La Force, the tough ex-Governor of Béarn, at the head of several thousand tried soldiers, had entered the town and had joined the inhabitants, who were firmly resolved to defend it. The story of that astonishing siege does not belong to this history, but it was

an event so striking in itself that some indications of its character cannot be omitted. The King sat down before it in the middle of August. Still under the influence of Luynes he rejected the wise counsel of the crafty Lesdiguières, who advised him to defeat Rohan and clear the country of enemies before he grappled with the Huguenot stronghold. Sully, one of whose sons was with La Force, was allowed to try the effect of negotiation, and when he failed in that purpose, the blundering work began. But the royal cannon, the reckless valour of the nobles, and the common-place but ungrudging devotion of the troops, were not more effective than Sully's exhortations in taming the spirit of the intrepid garrison. The lines of investment were so badly drawn that Rohan cleverly managed to throw in succours, and the temper of the defenders was so high that they endured the cannonade and repelled assaults with equal energy and fervour. Moreover, as was wise, they retorted upon the besiegers with such vigour that more than once they swept the trenches clear and burned the gun-carriages. Neither onsets nor mines daunted this valiant garrison, and from the beginning to the end they had the upper hand. To indicate the bungling of the assailants it is only necessary to note that one of their mines exploded against them; and of course the mischance was followed by a furious sortie.

Yet there was no lack of courage in the royal ranks. Bassompierre and his Swiss had a line of gabions upon a crest above a hollow way. Daring men from the fortress entered the ravine, and drew down the gabions with hooks, and fired into the post, until they were driven off. The next night, says Bassompierre, "a Swiss of my company, named Jacques" offered, for the reward of a crown, to fetch up the gabions, and redeemed his promise. "What most astonished us," the narrator continues, "was that he bore them on his neck, so strong and robust was he." The hardy

Switzer performed the feat under fire. When he had brought up six, the officers begged him to desist, but he answered that there was still one below, and that he must fetch it to fulfil his bargain. And he did so, getting off, unwounded, on the night of August 26th, 1621. Thus it was not for lack of resolute men that Montauban could not be taken. During this extraordinary siege, Vair, a lawyer, who held the Seals, died, and Louis gave them to Luynes, which made the sarcastic Condé, then on leave of absence at Bourges, remark that he would be a good Constable in time of peace, and a good Chancellor in time of war. But Luynes performed both functions. He sat in Court to hear causes, and when a cannon-shot was fired, he would pause, and thrust his head out of the window to watch the cannonade. And he had cause for anxiety. The loss of officers in the desperate combats, the Duke of Mayenne, son of the corpulent old Leaguer among them, was heart-rending. Nor did they fall before Huguenot lead and steel alone. The young Duke of Montmorency arrived with a strong reinforcement, but he and his men speedily suffered from the maladies which raged in the filthy camps of over-worked and ill-fed soldiers. Luynes, who had taken to wife the fascinating Marie de Rohan, a daughter of the Duke of Montbazon, sought and obtained an interview with her relative, the able captain, Henri de Rohan, and endeavoured to work on his fears by threats of confiscation, a very weak device. The stern Huguenot leader was steadfast. He declared, and it was the truth, that he was prepared for any loss, and that he would not yield an inch, unless a general peace with the whole body of the Huguenots were achieved. He had pledged his word and would keep his pledge. Nothing, therefore, was gained by trying to frighten Rohan.

Winter was by this time at hand in the bleak region of the Tarn. Disease had reduced the royal army by thou-

sands, sparing not even the prelates, three of whom died, while the sturdy garrison of Montauban, and its not less sturdy inhabitants of both sexes, were as obstinate and aggressive as ever. It was not the first time that the women of Montauban had engaged in battle. Froissart tells us how, in 1366, they helped the Free Companions engaged in the service of the Black Prince to beat off their French assailants under the walls of the town. The like spirit animated the Huguenots, and in November Louis was obliged to raise the siege, and retire to Toulouse. It is said that the ignorance of war displayed by the Chancellor-Constable disgusted the King. If so, he was soon relieved from the task of judging his favourite, for, in turn, Luynes fell ill and died of a fever at Condom, in December 1621. "When his corpse," writes Fontenay-Mareuil, "was on its way to be buried, I believe in his Duchy of Luynes, I saw his valets playing at piquet upon the hearse, while they gave a feed to the horses." Nevertheless, as the Père Griffet proves, the Constable had a magnificent funeral service at Tours, before his remains were borne to the tomb at Luynes on the Loire. The terrible St. Simon has not spared one whom he styles "such a Constable," or failed to excuse the royal youth who belted the sword of this great office upon one so little accustomed to arms. "Before his death," he says, "his young master had opened his eyes. He took shame to himself that so lofty a post had been snatched from his inexperience, amid the darkness in which he had been reared. He often spoke to my father [the subsequent 'favourite,' and the first Duke of St. Simon], and complained to him about his surprise at the ambition of Luynes, and the way in which he abused his position, for the King found his subject clothed with a greatness which assumed too much authority." Many piquant anecdotes, told by Bassompierre, are to a like purport, and indicate that Louis, as his mind expanded from close

contact with men and things, was grievously disappointed when he came to test the character of his friend and deliverer.

Relieved from Luynes, the King gave the Constable's sword to one who was at least a warrior, and hardly less an astute diplomatist, Lesdignières, the ruler of Dauphiny, and the scourge as well as the ally of the Dukes of Savoy. To grasp the dignity and the power it bestowed he became, at first secretly and afterwards openly, a convert to Catholicism. That had been his religion until he was twenty years of age; at eighty, he returned to the faith of his fathers, and it is not at all improbable that each creed sat lightly on his conscience. He lived until 1626. Like-minded with Henry IV., he thought that the sword of the Constable—he was the last man who bore it—was worth a mass. He was of the race of warrior-statesmen who rise by native superiority; and, morals apart, of which few in that day had an excess, he is one of the grandest and most masterful figures who shine out in the wars of the League and the conflicts at the opening of the seventeenth century. The man of that period most like him is that Henry, Duke of Montmorency, also a Constable, who in 1614 died in his bed with his helm and armour on over the Capucin raiment which he had donned, and his big sword by his side. He had ruled in Languedoc as Lesdignières had in Dauphiny.

Encouraged by their success at Montauban, the Protestants became more enterprising, and the unhappy war went on, although the leaders on both sides were anxious to devise, the fanatics and intriguers to avert, a *modus vivendi*. The question was complicated by private ambitions and external incidents, but the main fact seems to be that the King was resolved to rule over an united State, and not to permit any independent religions and political institutions to grow up in the realm. Accordingly, in 1622, the campaign was resumed; and, as is usual in religious wars, each party was guilty of

treachery and cruelty. The Huguenots held on to Rochelle and its neighbourhood; seized an island in the Garonne to raise revenue; surprised Royan, and occupied several other towns, but were the more formidable in the region of Montpellier. Their leaders were Soubise, La Force, Rohan, and Châtillon.

The young King at this juncture behaved with decision. He himself led a night attack upon the positions held by Soubise in the islands south of Rochelle, crossing the channels at low water at the head of his troops, and dashing in upon the Huguenot captain with such vigour that Soubise was driven to his ships and barely escaped himself, while the greater part of his bands were captured. St. Simon writes in his superb *Parallèle des trois Premiers Rois Bourbon*, that repeated efforts were made by his officers to restrain the King, and prevent him from attacking the islands. They went the length of urging that, if he persisted he would be sending the troops to slaughter. "I know it well," the King replied, "and it is because I know it that I intend to go; because I know not how to send troops to slaughter unless it is necessary, and I lead them myself. I am obliged to you for your remonstrances, but let me hear no more on the subject." He spoke with his usual coolness and moved on. "My father," continues St. Simon, "who heard his words, repeated them to me, and described the inexpressible astonishment of those who were present." In fact, the youth, he was still only twenty-one, had become a man, and proved emphatically that he had a will of his own. It may be said that the attack on the Poitevin Islands, so little expected and so resolute, revealed alike to soldiers and courtiers that this young King had a character, and was not the cipher they had supposed him to be.

At this time Fabert was still with the Duke of Epemon, the man who was slow to obey. He had been requested to

aid in the reduction of Poitou, but had remained at Bordeaux, pleading, perhaps with reason, the exigencies of his own situation at a moment when the Huguenot leaders had a fort on an island in the Garonne, and a garrison in Royan, while La Force was in Tonneins. Epemon had failed in an effort to obtain the river stronghold by negotiation, and was not strong enough to take it by force. Therefore the King marched upon Royan, and laid siege to it in form. Seated on a rock, surrounded on two sides by the sea, defended by deep double ditches, and well garrisoned, it seemed a formidable obstacle. Yet it was reduced within a week, but at some cost of life, for although the Gardes Françaises lost comparatively few men, the Duke of Epemon's troops, Champagne and his own Guards, were dreadfully cut up. Their cannon had made a breach, and the Duke of la Valette led the storming column. But, as they ascended the ruined slope the defenders fired a mine, and repelled the onset. The Duke was half buried in the débris, and owed his life to Montigny, his squire, and Fabert, who was struck in one hand, and carried away two musket-balls in his clothes. The King's Guards, according to Puysegur, had cleverly secured a lodgment on the other front of attack, and had removed the powder from a mine, so that, although Epemon's efforts were unsuccessful, the place was practically captured. The garrison, therefore, capitulated; but the fact that they were allowed to retire upon Rochelle, shows how anxious the King was to set himself free for further and more arduous enterprises. He had throughout shown a forward valour and intrepidity which made Bassompierre say that he never knew a braver man, and that even the late King, Henry IV. himself, did not surpass his son in coolness under fire.

The war rolled southward, accompanied by an undertone of negotiations for a general peace carried on chiefly by the wise old Constable, who, backed by a strong party in the King's

council, sincerely desired to attain that end. Indeed, the sword played the lesser, and intrigue the greater part, during the summer months. Thus La Force, the valiant defender of Montauban, fell away from the Protestant cause, converted himself to Catholicism, and received money gifts and a Marshal's bâton as his reward. Châtillon, the grandson of Coligny, followed his example, and rose to a rank which was still coveted, although it had been attained by men like Concino, Luynes, and his brother. The crafty Duke of Bouillon, now old and wearied, kept guard in Sedan; but, although he did not take the field, he had influence enough to bring Mansfeldt and Christian of Brunswick, with their mercenary bands, over the Moselle and up to the Meuse. Their inroad alarmed the King and his nobles, filled Paris with apprehension, and cheered the Protestants in the South.

They were the survivors of the battle on the White Mountain, near Prague, which wrecked the hopes of the Elector Palatine, whose wife was Elizabeth Stuart, "the Queen of Hearts." Christian, writes Carlyle, was "a high-flown, fiery young fellow, of terrible fighting gifts, he flamed up considerably with 'the Queen of Bohemia's glove stuck in his hat'"; and called himself "the friend of God and the foe of priests." Ernest Mansfeldt had genuine soldierly qualities, and in his ranks rode a youth who afterwards came to be famous, Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar. But neither Ernest nor Christian, with their ill-paid and unruly men, could make anything of this incursion into Champagne. After much diplomatic fencing with French envoys, who were sent to amuse the invaders and gain time, after a little fighting, and an interview between Mansfeldt and Bouillon "in the meadows near Douzy" on the Chiers, as the Duke of Nevers and other Dukes were gathering forces in their front; while Gonzalez of Cordova, a shining captain of those days, was moving on their rear, the two adventurers and their troops suddenly rode off

through the forests near Rocroi, and quartered themselves in Hainault.

Thus vanished the hopes which Rohan had founded upon the German diversion. The peace negotiations failed for the time, and, as Mansfeldt's bands stealthily and swiftly hastened towards the end of August down the Meuse, King Louis led his army to the siege of Montpellier. It was ill conducted by the Prince of Condé, cost the lives of many brave men, and utterly failed as a siege, although it led to that general peace for which Rohan had contended. Our interest in the business centres solely in one fact. Fabert, who was there, and ceaselessly active, had the good fortune to make prisoner a captain, and was presented by Epernon to the King, who then saw him for the first time—not an unimportant incident in his life, though it bore no present fruit. The great anxiety of all soldiers was to gain the notice of the King, and the sometime cadet in the Guards, and still ensign in Piedmont, had got thus far in his twenty-third year.

The "peace," so hardly acquired, was a mere truce. Montpellier lost its sheltering walls; the blockade of Rochelle was raised, but Fort Louis was not destroyed. Lesdignières, who always kept his eyes steadily on the facts, uttered a shrewd remark which implied that he had little trust in the peace. "Either Rochelle must take Fort Louis," he said, "or Fort Louis must take Rochelle." The contest was deferred, not terminated; and even for the moment the terms of accommodation were but indifferently observed. Outside the harbour of Rochelle the King had a squadron, and when Guiton, the Mayor, repaired thither that he might surrender his flag to the Duke of Guise, "I accept it," said the Duke, "but I return it to you, for I have not won it in battle." So curiously were punctilious notions of honour blended with habits of treachery and cruelty in the conduct of these grand seigneurs. At this very time the conditions of the peace were not fulfilled, and

the Père Guiffet himself confesses that the course followed by the Court towards the Huguenots was only one fit to kindle afresh the fires of war.

At a later period that unhappy conflict between the King and his Protestant subjects was renewed. The interval between the making and the breaking of the truce of Montpellier was, for Fabert, a time of weary expectation and disappointed hopes. He had proved that he was brave, devoted, and capable, but his valour and services brought him no promotion. It was not a rare case. Puysegur, a noble, who was nearly his own age, and served as a cadet in the guards at the siege of Montpellier, indignantly relates how the King promised to make him an ensign, as the reward of a daring and perilous action, and how he did not redeem his word, because he had already given the first vacancy to another youth. Indeed, Puysegur did not get his colours until 1624, nor his captaincy until 1631, so that Fabert, who was not a noble, had no real ground for complaint on the score of slow advancement. He had, however, a grievance. The Duke of la Valette had promised to give him a company in Piedmont, but when it fell vacant in 1624, moved by his Duchess, Gabrielle-Angélique, who was an illegitimate daughter of Henry IV., the Duke gave it to her squire, a M. Conseil.

This breach of faith led to a series of incidents which revealed the fiery temper of Fabert. He determined to force a duel on Conseil. That was an action quite in accordance with the spirit of the time, for when a regiment to the command of which the Marquis of Thémînes had a claim, was bestowed on the elder brother of the Cardinal de Richelieu, De Thémînes did not turn his wrath on the minister, but challenged and slew his brother in single combat. In like manner Fabert held accountable, not the Duke who had broken his word, but the inferior who profited

by the wrong. When he heard that the Duchess had started for Metz, he hurried after, hoping to overtake her suite somewhere in Lorraine, and beyond the reach of those edicts against duelling which few or none observed. He came up with Conseil, however, at Pont à Mousson, challenged him on the spot, and at once drew his sword. The rivals, equally infuriated, do not appear to have done more than strike out simultaneously, and almost at random. Fabert came off with a severe wound in the throat, his rival's blow having been weakened by alighting on the collar of Fabert's dress, but Conseil was pierced through the chest and fell dead on the spot.

Wounded as he was, Fabert had to fly, yet, as the gates were shut, he was obliged to seek an asylum in the town. He must have been well known in Pont à Mousson, so near to his native place, and, aided by a comrade, the Baron of Grateloup, he soon found temporary safety in the house of a civic official, called the Captain of the Burghers. There his wound was dressed; but as it would have been fatal to remain within reach of La Valette, the faithful Captain quietly and carefully dropped the fugitive from the walls into the ditch, whence he was transported to Pagny, lower down the Moselle, and securely hidden. The angry Duke, unable to discover his retreat, made a formal application for his surrender to the young Duke of Lorraine, but Charles was not disposed to surrender a Fabert whose only offence was that he had killed a rival in a duel, no crime at all in the eyes of princes and nobles. The fugitive, on the contrary, was assured that the ducal protection should shield him at any place within Lorraine. The message set Fabert at his ease, and when he had recovered his health, he boldly went to Paris itself. The resentment of La Valette had gone before him, and the Governor ordered him at once to leave the capital.

He now took a more audacious step. The château of Moulins, close to Metz, was a little fortress, having stout walls flanked by six towers, and a good ditch all round. Fabert rode off to Moulins and shut himself up in the castle under the nose of La Valette. The mere fact of retiring to a fortress when in trouble was common enough ; indeed, the great, and even the lesser nobles, regarded the possession of a well-garrisoned "*place de sûreté*" as indispensable. Fabert does not appear to have had any soldiers in his father's stronghold, but when summoned, as we assume he was, he kept his gates closed. The Duke then drew out a troop and a couple of guns, in order to make the young ensign hear reason. But, to her great credit, the Duchess, who was the original cause of the mischief, here interposed, recognizing, perhaps, that she had done wrong, and induced her husband to leave Fabert unharmed. It may be also that La Valette remembered how he owed his life to the young officer, and even that the elder Fabert, who was a citizen of weight as well as tact, helped the Duchess by his judicious behaviour. So his son gained, instead of losing, by an act which marked his fearlessness as well as his temerity.

The succession of misfortunes and hard usage, due in some degree to his own faults, for a moment soured the temper of Fabert ; but, possessed of great common sense, he soon controlled his anger. At first, depressed as well as irritated, he brooded over a project which did not become him. He proposed to raise a troop of cavalry, and cross the Rhine to fight under the flag of the Empire. A youth so frank could not keep such a grave inclination a secret from his father and friends. By some means, easily imagined, his wild plan was communicated to the Duke of Epernon, who at once summoned him to Bordeaux. Much as he loved and spoiled his favourite son, the King's brother-in-law, La Valette, the Duke was not blind to the levity of his behaviour ; nor was he of a

temper likely to leave him in ignorance of his sentiments. In brief, Epernon soon reasoned Fabert out of his notion of quitting France, renewed his promise to give him higher rank as soon as he could, reconciled the offended ensign to La Valette, and sent him in company with the latter to Paris. Epernon had learned that the Duke of Elbœuf, a Guise, was not unlikely to fasten a quarrel on his son, and in case the difference led to a duel, Fabert was requested to act as second. In those days such a request, regarded as a great honour, must have flattered the young soldier. The paternal alarm proved to be unfounded, at least no duel ensued; but the trust reposed in him enabled Fabert once more to visit Paris and his old comrades in the Guards.

Sometime afterwards, the threatening motions of an Imperialist army on the Rhine caused some anxiety for the safety of Metz. Governor La Valette was ordered to his post and directed to raise regiments. Again Fabert had the promise of a company in the new levies, but as the danger, if it ever existed, blew over, the order to array these frontier forces was cancelled, and the young man was left without the command he so feverishly desired. His thirst for service is commendable, but he deservedly suffered for his impatience. At length, in 1627, the Duke of Epernon, who never forgot, was able to reward him. Returning to Bordeaux, after the fruitless sojourn in Metz, he found, on his arrival, that he had been posted to the regiment of "Rambures," and that the office he was to fill was that of Sergeant-Major. Rambures was one of the smaller "old corps"; its Colonel belonged to a family famous in French military annals—the readers of Shakespeare will remember that

"The master of the cross-bows, Lord Rambures,"

figures on the list of the dead at Agincourt, and on many a field did men bearing that name lie stark in after years. The

smaller old corps were part of the standing army, but their strength in 1627 was only half that of the greater corps, such as those bearing the names of Picardy, Normandy, Champagne, and Piedmont. The difference was that one had six, and the other ten companies of a hundred men.

The duties of a Sergeant-Major seem to have combined those of quarter-master and adjutant, and the excellence of a regiment largely depended upon the abilities of its Sergeant-Major. He was a mounted officer, and from his functions, practically second to the *Mestre-de-Camp*, or Colonel. Fabert was thus promoted to a post of great responsibility, and he thought fit to consult on the occasion a certain La Hillière, then in command at Loches, and himself Sergeant-Major of the Guards. La Hillière, who had known him as a cadet, gave him good counsel and inspired him with confidence, for face to face with his weighty duties Fabert seems to have felt some trepidation. "A man of your age and abilities, who is afraid of failing," said La Hillière, "is sure to succeed." Elated by the words of his old superior officer, he joined his regiment, then forming part of a force which was blockading Rochelle. From this date, he may be said to have started fairly on the loftier level which opened the road to that zealous and unremitting service which was to gain him the distinction he coveted and deserved.

CHAPTER IV.

FABERT BECOMES A CAPTAIN.

DURING the five years following the peace of Montpellier, while Fabert was chafing under the stings of disappointment, or revenging his wrongs after the fashion of the day, or meditating on service in a foreign land, the Court and what, for politeness' sake, may be called the Administration, had varied in aspect from year to year. The play of intrigue in those exalted regions had been as incessant, as brilliant, and as sustained, but not so harmless as summer lightning; and the young King, supposed erroneously to have no will of his own, no character, and not much intelligence, had, during his apprenticeship to the trade of kingcraft, tried and found wanting many men who were thrust, or who had thrust themselves, into high places. In the fiscal and financial departments, for example, despite changes of persons, matters were always growing worse. Turkish misdeeds, under Abdul Aziz, supposed to be peculiarly "oriental," were not more stupid and dishonest than those which prevailed in "occidental" France.

When the veterans, nicknamed the "*barbons*," who came in and flourished after the death of d'Ancre, were displaced in 1621, the Duke of Schomberg was appointed Superintendent of Finances. Knowing nothing of his business he could only follow the practice of his predecessors, who raised money by multiplying offices, obtaining advances of cash at high

rates of interest, and creating debt. Personally honest, he had neither the genius nor the power required to contend with the corrupt and corrupting methods of obtaining and disbursing money which then prevailed. He was soon "disgraced," that is, deprived of his post, and it was suggested to Louis that he had been guilty of "malversation." "If he has, it is not the fault of Schomberg, but of the King," said the blunt Robert Andilly to his Majesty. The King asked why. "Because, Sire," was the answer, "if your Majesty in making M. de Schomberg Superintendent, had at the same time given him power to nominate all those dependent on the office, he would have been responsible for their actions. But your Majesty *sells* the posts to the highest bidder, and only those buy who are passionately intent on growing rich." The King made no reply to the truth-teller, but he did not resent the telling of the truth. Indeed, at a later date, he wanted Andilly to purchase the post of Secretary of State for one hundred thousand crowns, which were to be paid over to the family of the defunct official. The offer was declined, with severe and uncourtly comment. Having entered the Court under Henry IV., he said, "I have been brought up in the belief that steady labour to deserve high posts would suffice, as it once did, to justify the hope that they could be obtained without payment."

Now, whether he approved or not, the King was powerless to prevent the purchase and sale of places, and the custom was as thoroughly established when he died as it was when he ascended the throne. What is true of one superintendent is true of all, and La Vieuville, who succeeded Schomberg, fared rather worse, for he was not only disgraced, but arrested on charges never followed up.

His brief term of office, however, was rendered memorable by one act. He prevailed on the King to admit Richelieu, now a Cardinal, to a seat in the council. It was a mere

foothold of power, but enough ; the Cardinal, overcoming, by degrees, the repugnance which had been instilled into the King, rooted himself every day more firmly in his confidence. The finances were not one whit the less viciously managed ; but Louis, at length, had found, and had the wit to keep, as his minister, the man of genius who had been striving so long and so fruitlessly to attain a station whence he could work, without stint, for the aggrandizement, the “predominance,” of France, and for her “glory” as well as his own. Surely, a monarch who could recognize, and, despite his prejudices, retain in his service a man of such unusual vigour, inventiveness and capacity, must have been very different from that mixture of cipher, idler, and slave, who inherited nothing from his father but his courage, which it has pleased so many excellent historians to compound as a fair representation of Louis XIII. The secret of the long relationship between the King and Statesman was a profound community of aims which led to the steadfast co-operation of both in the ambitious and exhausting task which they had set themselves to achieve—a large theme which may be more fitly handled on a later occasion. For the present we can only take note that the minister, beset on all sides, openly and furtively—by Gaston, the King’s brother, by Anne the King’s wife, by women, like Marie de Rohan, the widow of Luynes and the wife of the Duke of Chevreuse, who had youth, beauty and ability, but not a spark of morality, and by men like the Vendômes and Ornanos—did more than defend himself, he retorted and triumphed. Why ? Not only because he was a strong man, but because he had the frank and steady support of the King. “By whomsoever you are attacked,” wrote Louis, in 1626, “you will have me for second.” The weak, vicious, and treacherous Gaston was reduced to ignoble submission, the Vendômes were imprisoned in Amboise, and Ornano shut up in the

Bastile where he died. The Duchess of Chevreuse, who had engaged in a plot to assassinate the Cardinal, and had pushed on to the scaffold her lover, Chalais, a Talleyrand with too much zeal (he was her first but not her last victim), was herself banished. The punishment was slight; but, as the Père Griffet drily observes, these female conspirators were so audacious because women were never executed in France, an immunity which operated as a bounty on crime. "One day," writes Fontenay-Mareuil, "I saw all these ladies"—Chevreuse, Conti, La Valette—"at the bedside of Ornano, Gaston's bear leader. They were prattling to him in such a style that, if he had not been so old, and the ugliest man in the world, it might have been thought that they wanted to seduce him. He was so delighted that he could refuse them nothing;" that is he joined the faction of both sexes, busied in contriving the ruin of the Cardinal. Nor that only, for they wished to secure the plunder of the treasury, and to frustrate what the King and his minister held to be the patriotic policy.

In that interval of five years, the King's sister Henrietta Maria, still a mere girl, had been married to Charles Stuart, and he had become King of England. One is astounded at the madness of these British marriages. The obstinacy, and we might almost say, the treachery of Marie de Médicis, forced on her boy son a Spanish bride, whose heart was Spanish to the core, while James Stuart first sought a wife for Baby Charles in the bigoted Court of Madrid, and then accepted a Bourbon princess, whose religion was detested by the fierce people among whom she came to dwell, and whose royal brother was compelled by the necessity of his position to wage war upon and subdue the high-tempered Protestants of France. How short-sighted the calculation that an alliance with England, against Austria and Spain, would be assured by such a match! The King and his ministers, who

understood continental peoples and politics, knew little of the English, their temper or their institutions; and the alliance soon dissolved in hostilities, not merely because Buckingham's vanity was cut to the quick by the refusal of Louis to bear with his presence in Paris, but mainly because the strong and rising Puritan party would not endure the toleration of Catholics at home or the persecution of Protestants abroad. Richelieu, who wanted internal tranquility, would have behaved fairly towards the Protestants, as such, but neither he nor the King could tolerate pretenders to a species of separate political status in the monarchy.

When Soubise surprised the port of Blavet, captured and carried off the King's ships, and sought aid from Spain, war was unavoidable. The moderate section, aided by the converts, Lesdiguières and La Force, endeavoured to restrain the enthusiasts; but Soubise was intractable unto the end, and his brother Henry of Rohan felt bound in honour to stand by the cause, even when he disapproved the methods adopted to sustain it. In this second contest the Huguenots, defeated but not subdued, accepted an arrangement which left the quarrel undecided, and the French Court, at the same time, made peace with Spain, against which Power Louis was waging "unofficial war" in Italy and in the Grisons. The religious truce was not made to wear, and within a year of its conclusion, the smouldering fire broke out afresh.

During the snatch of quiet the Cardinal fortified himself in his great office, bore harshly on his inveterate foes, as they would have borne upon him: demolished the feudal castles, a popular stroke; suppressed the dignity of Constable on the death of Lesdiguières; deprived the Duke of Montmorency of "the Admiralty," paying him an indemnity, and took to himself what we should call the ministry of the Marine and Commerce, thus resuming the work which Sully began and Colbert completed—the establishment of the

French Navy. So that when the Huguenots could bear their wrongs no longer, and England from being estranged had become openly hostile to France, the King and Richelieu found themselves strong enough to undertake a war for the subjection of the Protestants, a bitter war which had begun when Fabert joined his regiment before unyielding Rochelle.

Before the famous siege began he had time to take up his new duties. Although the Colonel of Rambures was a brave soldier, a "come along," and not a "go along" officer, he does not appear to have been an adept in the art of rendering his officers and men formidable by their discipline. Now Fabert had precisely those qualities which enable a man to impose his will without arousing the mutinous tendencies which order and rigour are apt to provoke. He found dissensions existing among the officers, and where that is the case the rank and file are not likely to be obedient and well in hand. He composed the differences by mingled firmness and courtesy, and inspired both officers and men with that *esprit de corps* so essential to regimental efficiency. It was his first essay in an art which he developed in perfection, and Rambures was so well trained and disciplined under the hands of Fabert, that it was called a "model regiment." He won the confidence of the corps, the lasting friendship of its gallant colonel, and the admiration of the army. An officer of that stamp was certain not to be overlooked by the King who, though reserved and undemonstrative, had an observing eye and a tenacious memory. It is also recorded of Fabert that he declined to take extra allowances and perquisites pertaining by custom to his office, and contented himself with his pay and the fare accorded to the staff; no slight merit in a grasping and venal age. Disinterestedness was one of his characteristics throughout his life. Greedy of employment and honour, he had no ambition to grow rich.

The reformation of Rambures was effected in the period

between the defeat of Buckingham, which preceded the arrival of Fabert in the camp, and the building of the "dyke" across the channel leading from the ocean to Rochelle. The story of the "descent on the Isle of Ré" is well known, and need not be repeated; but one little incident recorded by Puysegur, then an ensign in the Guards, and forward in the action, suggests a picture of the unlucky favourite which might have drawn a smile as well as a tear from Anne of Austria, who, the scandal-mongers say, prayed for the success of her splendid admirer. The English troops, in retreating upon their enforced point of embarkation, were compelled to traverse a narrow causeway, bordered by shallow waters and deep mud. Young Puysegur, with the leading files, "*enfants perdus*," he calls them, of the foremost company of Guardsmen, declares that near a one-arched bridge he recognized "Bouquinkan" (Buckingham)—thus showing how, like the brave man he was, "Steenie" fought to the last with the sturdy and hardly-pressed rear-guard. Now, the object of the little ensign was to capture the great Duke. "But," the narrative continues, "his soldiers who were on the bridge promptly laid hands on him, some seizing him by the arm-pits, others by the legs, and, hoisting him aloft, passed him from hand to hand" until he was in safety. The bridge was short, and the summary mode of transport brief in duration, "so that he could not be captured; "but," says the lively Gascon, "we took le Mylord Montoigre," otherwise Lord Mountjoy, who certainly was made prisoner, and conveyed, it seems, to the rear by Sergeant Chavannes, who served in the company commanded by Captain la Salle, to which Ensign Puysegur belonged. As a guardsman he must have seen Buckingham in Paris when he wore his "rich white satin uncut velvet suit set all over" with diamonds, or one of his twenty-seven other suits, "all rich as invention could frame, or art fashion;" and perhaps the contrast between the

dazzling courtier and the besmirched soldier, handled like a bale of goods, presented itself to the mind of the eager ensign, when deprived of a splendid prize.

It was not the good fortune of Fabert to have any part in the defeat of Buckingham. He came too late. Nor do we know that he did anything of mark during the winter months of 1627-28, beyond his successful management of Ram-bures. Vague reports of uncertain value represent him as sedulously studying the building of the dyke, and suggesting plans for improving the methods employed in its construction. Nor is that unlikely, seeing that he was ingenious, and had a strong bias towards all kinds of mechanical contrivances; but whether he wrote out his ideas or not, he must have lingered long on the sandy shores watching the works. It is remarkable that the originator of the scheme for shutting up Rochelle does not appear to be known. If, as one report states, the Duke of Epernon advised the construction in 1621-22, it may be that Fabert, who had reconnoitred the country about Rochelle, was the author. But the project is attributed also to an Italian engineer, and to the father and brother of Fabert, though neither he nor they ever laid claim to the honour. Fontenay-Mareuil, a sober, well-informed person, says that the enterprise, as finally undertaken, was devised by Clement Métezeau, the King's chief architect, and Jean Tiriot, one of the principal masons of Paris. It was a great work, much bungled at the beginning, but successfully accomplished in the end. During its progress the veteran Spinola came to spy into the prospects of the blockade, gave his approval, counselled patience, and left for Madrid, confident that Rochelle would fall by famine, and that this thorn in the side of Spain's antagonist would be removed. The old warrior-merchant did not know that he was soon to begin his last siege, and die in harness in front of Casale on the Po, not far from his own native city.

While Rochelle, sealed up by land and sea, would not yield, Henry of Rohan had raised the south, and Condé was sent thither to command against him. But he was no match for the greatest French soldier of his day, one whose campaigns in the mountain lands of France, in the Grisons and the Valtelline, and whose military memoirs are still studied and admired. Condé, no soldier and a selfish politician, more apt to begin than able to finish an enterprise, was aided by the generous Montmorency, beloved in Languedoc, and the imperious Epernon, whose province was Guyenne, and who was not much loved anywhere. Rohan, although he had nothing wherewith to fight and manœuvre except armed peasants and stout burghers, was superior to the trio, and the King, before Rochelle, was obliged to detach troops, for the incapacity and ferocity of Condé called into the field men who were neutral, and the Huguenot leader, by wise and swift movements, continuously tumbled into ruin the plans of his opponents. Among the reinforcements sent southward was the regiment of Rambures, and thus Fabert once more found himself with his exalted and captious but faithful friend the Duke of Epernon. Into the details of the campaign it is needless to enter, further than to say that the King and Richelieu being alarmed and dissatisfied, Epernon sent Fabert to explain and defend his share, and so well did he fulfil his task that the Cardinal gave up his suspicions, expressed his approval of the Duke's conduct, and took note of the envoy, the sole fact important to us.

The hideous and revolting kind of warfare carried on against the Protestants in the South, lighted up and made in some degree memorable by the heroism, the genius, and the unflagging activity of Rohan, lingered through the summer, and as winter approached, Fabert, probably in the suite of Epernon, once more joined the army engaged in reducing by stress of famine the unyielding burghers of

Rochelle. Animated by Mayor Guiton, a hero half merchant, half sailor, sustained by the example of Rohan's mother and sister, the little garrison, and the emaciated townsfolk would not surrender until they had literally nothing edible left to eat.

Fabert, always on the alert, was one of the first to enter the desolate city, and he has left a brief yet moving picture of the horrible scene. The streets were strewn with dead bodies, the houses were sepulchres, "one could not step without moving through a fœtid atmosphere exhaled by the dead and dying. The cemeteries were covered with corpses, and I have heard," he goes on, "that numbers of persons had dug their own graves, and lain down beside them to await death and burial. Thus they died without consolation, as they had lived without hope. However they might pity one another, each one kept his charity for himself. But the rich, when I entered, had come to this—they flung from their windows a species of paste made from the leather of old boots, shoes, harness, and other execrable matters, and the poor never ceased to swallow this nourishment, until the King sent a supply of bread from the commissariat of the army." It is said that when the place at length surrendered, there were only one hundred and thirty-six men able to bear arms! Richelieu had been thirteen months before the town; he broke her proud spirit, abolished her franchises, and threw down her walls; but he left behind a desert. Rochelle, the last of the republican municipalities, has never regained that power and prosperity which she owed to her liberty and independence.

The policy of crushing the internal enemy of unity and absolute government, in order to pave the way for that external activity which was to make France "preponderant," and enlarge her borders until they included the region of Gaul, as described by Cæsar, was not yet triumphant. The

bulwark of the Protestant League had fallen, but Rohan and the people of the hill cities, and people of the South were in arms, their firm spirit still unsubdued. Luckily, or rather unluckily for them, since the lapse of time only prolonged their agony, the Duke of Mantua died, and was succeeded by his cousin Charles Gonzaga, whose father Ludovic had acquired the French title of Duke of Nevers by marriage with the heiress of François de la Marck Cleeves, plus the favour of Charles IX. The Duchy of Mantua was a fief of the Empire, and the Duke had large possessions in Montserrat, coveted and claimed by his uncle, Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy. Neither the Emperor Ferdinand, nor the Savoyard, nor Spain, could quietly endure a French interest established on the Mincio and the Po, and as Louis was resolved to uphold his friendly Gonzaga, the Mantuan succession led to an Italian campaign, which was to serve the double purpose of supporting Nevers, and of relieving Casale, where an impromptu French garrison, composed of French troops which had hurried thither from the Valtelline, was besieged by a Spanish army under that Gonzalez of Cordova, whom, in 1622, we saw on the track of Mansfeldt in Champagne.

Until Rochelle surrendered, the French King could not move; but no sooner had Guiton struck his flag, than the army was directed upon Dauphiny, and with it marched Rambures and its Sergeant-Major, Fabert. Leaving a force to watch Rohan, Louis, in the depth of winter, led his troops through the valleys and over the hills of Dauphiny; and following the mountain road from Briançon to Turin, over the Col of Mount Genevre, found his march in the early spring arrested by a triple range of barricades erected in the narrow gorge down which the Dora hurries towards the Po, and known in French histories as the Pas de Suse. Charles Emmanuel had fortified this extremely narrow defile, hoping that he would be able to hold it until the Spaniards came

to his assistance, and he therefore temporized as long as he could, asking for time, when Louis required a direct answer to the question—Are you a foe, or a friend? Charles, indeed, always played too fine a game, and frequently over-reached himself, but it must be admitted that his situation, pressed upon by France, the Empire, and Spain, was most perplexing. The French, cooped up in the hills, their front being at Chiomonte, were not inclined to lose all their labour by delay, and they determined to force the pass.

It was here that Fabert displayed, not only his intrepidity, that was a common quality in the camp, but his skill as a soldier, which was not so common. While lying before the works he had been directed to reconnoitre them, having already a reputation for accurate observation and sound judgment. He made a close inspection, and drew a sketch of the position occupied by the Piedmontese, which showed that it was strong in front, but could be turned on both flanks, and he indicated a farmstead, which, while it would serve best as a position for a containing force, would also facilitate an attack. Rambures was ordered to occupy this post, but some of the officers, more valorous than wise, insisting that it was too far from the enemy, obtained authority to push the troops forward to a collection of huts which Fabert had declared were untenable. Angered by the change, he nevertheless led the men of Rambures into this exposed spot, and although they lost heavily, he was not content until the whole position had been explored, and its untenable character demonstrated, and he made one officer, especially, accompany him across the open, under fire, to complete the survey. His reason for this reckless adventure was not only to prove that his judgment was correct, but that while he ardently wished to spare the soldiers, he was not himself afraid of getting too close to the enemy. That purpose was achieved, and he naturally rose in the estimation of the troops as a prudent

as well as a brave officer. In the end, his plan of a flank attack was adopted, and the barricades were carried in one day.

It has been asserted over and over again that the victory was won by the irresistible "*furia francese*," which triumphed on ground where a handful might stop an army. The truth is that so soon as the heights on each flank were crowned and shots dropped in from the rear, the handful (2,500 men) very properly retreated, precisely the result anticipated by Fabert. Puysegur, who was present, has put the fact in a sentence. "The barricades," he says, "although very difficult, were forced because means were found to turn the right and left by climbing the rocks, which the enemy thought were inaccessible. When these had been surmounted, and the French saw into the rear of the entrenchments, the defenders retired." So that the barricades were captured by the application of means which small bodies cannot resist, and large bodies only can apply. One of the regiments employed to turn a flank, as we learn from Fontenay-Mareuil, was recruited among the mountaineers of Dauphiny.

The fruits of this combat were the surrender of Susa, and in a few days the acceptance by the Court of Turin of the terms offered by Louis. Charles Emmanuel himself came to Susa, and heard from his royal host the story of the Alpine march. Then the King led the Duke of Savoy to a window, and pointing to a sentinel on guard, said: "That soldier possesses thirty thousand livres a year, his name is Bréauté, and it was his grandfather who fought against Gravandon in Flanders. I have four hundred well-to-do gentlemen in my guards, who, before they become officers, learn the trade of a soldier in the ranks." This Bréauté, the sentinel, came of a fighting family who lived in the Pays de Caux; for the grandfather referred to, Charles of Bréauté, was he who, in 1600, while serving under Maurice of Nassau, got up a combat

between twenty Frenchmen and twenty Flemings. He killed his adversary, says Sully, but was afterwards assassinated himself, that is, a confirmed duellist, he was executed by the Governor of Bois le Duc. In fact, Bréauté had been banished from France because he could not refrain from provoking and fighting duels. King Louis, we see, was wont to take note of his soldiers. Puysegur naïvely relates how, being shabbily dressed, and being unable to get better clothes because the heavy baggage had been left at Grenoble, the King, who wanted the ensign to look decent when the Princess of Piedmont, his sister, arrived to witness a review, told him to choose one out of three suits, his Majesty's sole stock of raiment, and how the little man selected the most brilliant, scarlet in hue, and braided all over with silver and gold. So with Fabert. After the fight before Susa, the King presented him to Richelieu, saying: "Here is the brave major of whom I have spoken to you, and to whom I owe the success of this great day"—a sufficient testimony to the service rendered by the young staff-officer, who could not only draw a field sketch and make a daring reconnaissance, but had sound ideas of warfare.

One effect of the bold dash over the Alps was the immediate relief of Casale, from which Cordova retired, and another to set free a part of the French army for a brief and final campaign against the Huguenots. Créquy was left at Susa with a small force; the rugged Thoiras, who had stopped Buckingham's career in the Isle of Ré, was sent with another to Casale; while the King and Richelieu recrossed the Alps.

The campaign of 1629 against Rohan lasted not more than six weeks, for the Protestants in arms were exhausted, and their superb leader, not less than the Cardinal, desired to end the torment. Like all continental civil wars of that date it was a hideous business, yielding only profit and no honour. When the royal army broke into the Vivarais, captured and

sacked Privas, and compelled Alais to surrender, Rohan saw that resistance was hopeless, and another peace was made on the basis of an amnesty and the confirmation of the Edict of Nantes, but the fortified towns lost their defences, and property confiscated on both sides during the war was restored. Much to the chagrin of the grasping Prince of Condé, Rohan recovered his large estates, but was ordered to quit France, a mild penalty considering that he had received subsidies from Spain to carry on the civil war.

During its continuance Fabert had won fresh renown in the attack on Privas. Leading the volunteers of Rambures he carried a horn-work by escalade, and pressing the fugitives dashed into a demi-lune, but was driven out by the defenders. Wounded in the thigh by a musket-shot, he continued to command his men until they had made good and secured themselves in the horn-work. Then the pain subdued him, and he was borne out of the work and transported to Valence. His forward valour had not been unobserved. When he rejoined the King, Louis not only applauded his courage and endurance, he declared that such conspicuous acts should not be forgotten. In a short time he sent him a commission as Captain in Rambures with authority to retain his post as Sergeant-Major, an innovation upon the established rule. The fastidious and scrupulous character of Fabert led him to decline the promotion. He looked on the proffer as a slight to the Duke of Epemon, from whom, as Colonel-General of Infantry, his rank derived. He does not seem to have recognized the fact that Louis had in 1620 diminished the prerogatives of the imperious Colonel-General. At any rate, out of regard for Epemon and what he considered to be the army customs, he risked giving mortal offence to the King. His Colonel, Rambures, did all he could to mollify the royal anger, but Louis was not appeased, and he turned his back on Fabert when he appeared in Court. The King was in the

right on this occasion and Fabert in the wrong, but he preferred to hazard his chances of advancement rather than even seem ungrateful to the Duke who had always been his friend. At this juncture the Duke of la Valette was directed to escort Rohan to Venice, and Fabert thought it prudent to accompany him ; but he did not stay long in the beautiful City of the lagoons.

On quitting Italy he travelled to Metz, perhaps was summoned thither by his father, who still desired to withdraw his son from the career of arms. He offered him land and gold, pleading that he would only receive hard knocks and ill-usage in the service of the King. The Sergeant-Major was proof against the temptation, saying that he had good hopes of winning the King's favour when he had deserved it, and that he could not take what should be shared by his brother and sister. He was sickly at Metz, and starting to rejoin his regiment too soon, he became worse at Lyons, suffering from dysentery and fever. Here he remained several weeks, but, despite medical warnings, he once more mounted his horse and rode forth eastward. For the quarrel with Charles Emmanuel had broken out again ; Louis was marching on Savoy at the head of a large army, and Fabert could not willingly rest when his regiment was in the field. When he overtook the troops, he went to Court, and Louis, who had forgotten and forgiven, welcomed the young soldier with gracious words. The royal army easily captured Chambery, and then the regiment of Rambures was ordered to attack Fort l'Esquille. Fabert, alone, and at night, made such a close inspection of the fort, that he was able to indicate the weak points, and it soon surrendered, but, so far as appears, it was badly guarded and not stiffly defended. La Tour Carbonière, a stronger place, proved more difficult to reduce, and did not fall until Champagne had been reinforced by Rambures. Then the King overran the Tarentaise and the

Maurienne, and Prince Thomas retreated into Piedmont by the Little St. Bernard. King Louis now falling ill of a fever, returned to Lyons, escorted by the regiments of Picardy and Rambures.

Quitting the field of action much against his will, Fabert employed his leisure while at Lyons in studying mathematics. He was obliged to do so in secret, for the French noblesse still looked on the profound knowledge of any science, even one which was useful to a soldier, as a personal degradation. Fabert, says the Père Barre, concealed his serious studies so well, that during five-and-twenty years of his military life the officers with whom he served never looked on him as a learned geometrician, but believed that he had acquired what he knew solely from experience in warfare. That contempt for learning of all kinds was, as we have shown, an unhappy characteristic of a noblesse which had little in common with a genuine aristocracy except pride of birth and courage.

The new war in Italy, still nominally waged for the relief of Casale, now besieged by Spinola, brought out the Cardinal in a new character. Prime Minister since the end of 1629, Lieutenant-General and representative of the King, Richelieu the next year led an army under his personal command through the passes into Piedmont, and figured as a fighting priest. It has been said that he was so jealous of superior military merit that he could not allow a Créquy, a Bassompierre, or a Schomberg to win renown at the head of an army, lest it should dim his own; just as it has been asserted that Louis XIII. gave his brother Gaston no employment lest the laurels of the Prince should eclipse those of the King. Surely this opinion rests on a profound misconception of the facts. Richelieu may have been vain of a promotion which enabled him to ride about in plumed head-gear, clad in a cuirass and armed with sword and pistol, but he must have been set over the generals in order to ensure unity in working

out the political policy, and energy in pressing on the military movements. He was a negotiator as well as a general, and none of the nobles named had sufficient capacity to fill the post. Henry of Rohan was the only living soldier-statesman who would have been competent to fulfil the task, but he was not available. Richelieu may have been a poor commander, but he was a consummate politician, and the King made him his delegate or viceroy precisely because he could trust him to work for their common ends. Louis could not employ or trust Gaston, because the young man had neither ability nor character, and few things are more creditable to the King than his willingness on all occasions to forgive this weak and worthless brother, whose proneness to conspire was only equalled by his readiness to betray.

Richelieu, misled by Giulio Mazzarini, who first appeared on the scene in French history during this eventful year, had delayed his advance; and when he marched, instead of attacking Charles Emmanuel promptly on the Dora, near Avigliana, turned southward and seized Pignerolo. He gained the command of a secure road into Italy, but he risked the loss of Mantua, which soon capitulated, and of Casale, where Thoiras had once more to show his indomitable pluck. The plague, or some malignant malady, raged in every camp, and the French army, under Schomberg and La Force, beyond the Alps, was in danger. A greater plague and peril existed in France, where the Queen-mother, the Queen, and a host of malcontents were striving to ruin Richelieu during his absence. They might have spared their labour, for he was too firmly fixed; yet they had weight enough to bring the Cardinal back from the camp to fight alike for his power and his policy. The result was a disappointment for the intriguers. Richelieu did not return to Italy, as they would have wished; but strong reinforcements were sent thither through Savoy under Montmorency and Effiat, the father of

Cinq Mars, and a really honest Superintendent of Finances as well as a respectable soldier. Louis and the Cardinal accompanied the troops as far as the Maurienne, and thence on their way over Mont Cenis.

It was a critical moment. The wasted army under La Force about Pignerolo was isolated. The mountain mass which separates the valley of the Dora Riparia from the Val Clusone interposed between the succours descending the Mont Cenis and the troops at Pignerolo; while the levies of Charles Emmanuel, entrenched at Avigliana, were on the left flank of the advancing succour. The French at St. Ambrogio, on the right bank of the Dora, had to find their way to the road in the face of the menacing Italian camp. Fabert with Rambures was that day in the rear-guard; and as the Italians attacked the French when their columns were committed to the flank march towards and into the hill country, they were in manifest hazard. La Force, it is true, had come up to Giaveno, but could give no aid. The defile to be passed was less than five miles, but the road was bad, and the flat country seamed with irrigation channels and rivulets. According to Effiat's account, Montmorency, whose turn to command for a week had arrived, disdained the prudent advice of La Force, which was that he should leave his baggage at Susa and march at dawn. On the contrary, he sent his heavy train forward so late that it was nearly noon before the troops could move. Then the army, which had been in position fronting Avigliana, marched off in succession from the right, battalion after battalion plunging into the defile.

The Italians had a great opportunity, but Prince Thomas was not quick enough, he waited until he thought the weak-looking troops in sight were a sure prey. Then he issued out in three separate columns, instead of throwing the bulk of his force upon the head of the retiring rear-guard. The

consequence was that Effiat and Montmorency, using the superior French horsemen, fell fiercely on and routed the Italian cavalry, drove off the astonished and discouraged infantry, and made good their junction with La Force at Giaveno. It was not a brilliant example of warfare on either side, but on this occasion the "*furia francese*" on horseback saved the army from disaster, and hid the blunders under a flash of glory. During the combat, however, the left Italian column gained an advantage over Picardy and Rambures. The French *fantassins*, yielding to an impetuous onset, left Fabert and his colonel with a handful of men exposed to the assault of a much stronger body. The former saw that in the narrow way his handful would be equal to their hundreds provided he fell on at once. The Colonel, admitting his argument, that safety alone could be secured by a brusque attack, and that the example thus afforded would rally the fugitives, gave in, and dashing forward, they were speedily reinforced by their comrades, and thus by bold, hard fighting repelled an attempt which had it been successful would have cut off the cavalry. Fabert was as prompt, cool, and sure-eyed in battle as he was judicious in council, and the day brought him new renown.

The combined French force, before succouring Casale, besieged and took Saluzzo, thus recovering possession of the eastern slope of the Alps from the Mont Cenis to the Col de l'Argentière. In the attack on the town of Saluzzo, Fabert was engaged with his regiment, and carried away the marks of two musket balls in his hat. He also displayed his customary hardihood in reconnoitring the citadel; but when he made his report to the Colonel, M. de Rambures, without questioning its accuracy, insisted on seeing for himself, saying that his duty compelled him to do so. The Colonel on horseback and Fabert on foot advanced to the ditch, made their observations, and set out to return. On the way

from camp Fabert said to Rambures, "I have a presentiment that some misfortune will befall you." "Come along," answered the Colonel. Now Fabert seems at this time to have been a dandy, for he wore a satin pourpoint, braided with gold and silver; and Rambures, clad in sober raiment, insisted on returning that his brilliant subordinate should go in front. "Well," said the Colonel, "you are no prophet." "I hope so," was the reply, "but we are not yet out of range." The garrison, whose watch must have been very slack, at this moment caught sight of the scouting officers. Two shots were fired, one of which hit the horseman in his right shoulder, and the other struck off some of the gold braid from Fabert's dress. He conducted his Colonel safely to the camp, but it is not said that, warned by the misadventure, he wore less finery when he started out to inspect a fortress.

Fabert now, in common with hundreds of his comrades, was afflicted with fever, barely escaped with his life, and was carried to recruit his shattered health to Château Dauphiny, whence, as a peace had been patched up at Ratisbon, he travelled to Metz. A death vacancy occurred in his regiment, and the next year, 1631, at the request of the Colonel, the King not only bestowed the company upon Fabert, but permitted him as before to retain also his post of Sergeant-Major, an especial act of grace, and a strong testimony to the merit of Fabert, who had the satisfaction of knowing that Epernon approved the transaction. It is recorded that Fabert, hearing that he was distressed, and intimating that the money came from the King, paid over the price of the company, 7000 livres, to the brother of the defunct captain, who forthwith thanked Louis; and thus what was considered an act of remarkable generosity, became known to the Court, through the King, who often praised the disinterestedness of a man capable of paying for a death

vacancy. These are the traits which distinguish our hero, and throw his character into high relief upon the background of selfishness and depravity furnished by his age.

After eighteen years' service as cadet and officer, before he obtained the rank of captain, great events had made memorable the autumn and winter months of 1630. Charles Emmanuel, who was sixty-eight, and had reigned fifty years, died of chagrin when Saluzzo fell, and the French outposts were brought once more over the Alps. He was a man of great qualities, good and bad, and his "brave heart" broke when the work of a life was undone in a summer's day. A bold warrior, fighting sometimes pike in hand, a perfidious intriguer, cheating and being cheated, a friend of authors and poets, and a man of letters himself, a sovereign prince with big ideas of Italian regeneration—it was his fate to be styled "the disturber of Europe, and the scourge of his people," names he did not deserve more than his contemporaries in places of power, except that he failed where some of them succeeded. His son Victor Amadeus I. did not long keep up a show of resistance to the French, but was party to a transaction whereby some share of Montserrat came to him, and Casale was relieved.

The incidents which made the close of the siege memorable have been often told, having attracted attention because Mazzarini, who was to be famous as Mazarin, played therein such a conspicuous and dramatic part. But there was one scene in the melodrama which has not been so frequently described, although it illustrates the curious mixture of religion and ferocity often visible in seventeenth century wars. Spinola had died of vexation during the siege, and Santa Croce, his successor, commanded the Spanish army. The French approached the lines of the besiegers on the south-eastern face, both armies were arranged for a fight, and the intrepid Thoiras was ready to break out from

the citadel and take his share in the engagement. The sun shone from a cloudless sky on that 26th of October, 1630; every detail on each array in the field was visible to the other, and both were beheld at once from the citadel. There were three French Marshals present, and it was Schomberg's turn to command. He drew up his twenty thousand men in four lines, with a spray of *enfants perdus*, or skirmishers, in front, and the regular cavalry, as well as the mounted noblesse of Dauphiny, were opposite the intervals ready to charge. In this impressive order, and in "silence"—a phenomenon noticed at the time as unusual in their ranks—the French advanced until nearly within cannon shot; when, at a signal the mass halted, and simultaneously knelt down to pray—a most singular spectacle! Then followed the order to attack, silently and cheerfully obeyed. It was not to be; for Mazzarini, amid a sputter of musketry and cannon, suddenly appeared, and rode down at a gallop between the armies, staying the incipient fight, and bringing acceptable terms of peace, which he had been busily engaged in pressing on both sides. The terms are of little moment now to any one; but Schomberg's report on the campaign, detailed and precise, is well worth reading by students in the operations of war as they were conducted before Gustavus broke into Germany, and set an example which Condé of Rocroi, Guebriant, and especially Turenne were not slow to imitate and expand.

In that autumn of 1630, while Fabert was recovering from his fever at Château Dauphiny, Richelieu ran his greatest risk of total ruin. For the King was sick unto death at Lyons; his wife and mother, who tended him, and the grandees who wished well to Spain and ill to the Cardinal, plied the suffering monarch with every kind of argument, every species of calumny, and no lack of cries and tears, in order to procure Richelieu's dismissal, probably murder.

They counted so securely on the King's death that Bassompierre had in his pocket an order from Gaston to arrest the Cardinal! Great was their consternation and rage when Louis grew first less ill, and then able to travel slowly to Paris. Yet, in his weakly and distressed condition, the two queens, especially his mother, deprived him of needful repose by unceasing and remorseless attacks, and so far succeeded as to extort some promise adverse to the minister. But as he regained strength his resistance grew stouter, and it is barely conceivable that, being sound in mind and body, the King would ever part with a servant who was not only superior to all around him, but in thorough political accord with his master and colleague. Unity of aim was the bond that knitted these two men together, a fact which the queens and courtiers do not appear to have understood. Nor do they seem to have appreciated that strong quality in the Bourbon prince which made him capable of sacrificing the less to the greater. Personally he had no love for Richelieu, but if he did not find the man amiable, he felt that the minister was what may be called a colleague after his own heart; and he sacrificed his dislikes for the sake of the large enterprise upon which both were engaged. Much has been made of the King's moments of weakness. Louis XIII. would have been more than mortal if he had been always strong. He evidently gave way a little to buy peace from the queens at a price which buys none. But when the real crisis came he was, in the end, always firm. It was because the queens and their confederates did not take into account the grit, as hard as millstone, which was at the back of Louis' mind, that there was a Day of Dupes. The terrible scene in the Luxembourg is nowhere narrated with such dramatic vigour and authenticity as it is in the pages of St. Simon's *Parallèle*. The details of that encounter came from the elder St. Simon, the King's favourite, and the only eye and ear witness who has

reported them, and they are set down by the pen of a master in the art of swift, full, and graphic narration.

Finding the King so unwilling to dismiss Richelieu, Queen Marie professed her readiness to meet him at the council board, and in addition to receive back into her graces his niece, Madame de Combalet, whose husband, a relative of Luyues, was killed at Montpellier. Both were to be received at the Queen's "*toilette*" in the Luxembourg. On the morning of November 11th, 1630, besides Marie, the King, and St. Simon, the favourite, none else were admitted, not even the Captain of the Guard, except the serving men and women, who did not count as "persons." Louis and his mother were talking of the reconciliation when Madame de Combalet was admitted. The poor lady, who knelt at the feet of her mistress, and spoke with great humility and submission, was received with a chilling stare. Then the coldness of Marie became irritation, which grew into anger, and then an outburst of downright passion, which exhaled "in bitter reproaches, a torrent of abuse, and by degrees that kind of abuse which is only heard in *les halles*," or, as we should say, in Billingsgate. The King struck in, recalling the promises made to him, reminding his mother when her language became coarse that he was present, and that her Majesty should respect herself. "Nothing could arrest the torrent. From time to time the King, looking at my father, made gestures of astonishment and vexation; and my father, motionless, with his eyes fixed on the floor, dared only cast rare and stealthy glances at the King. He never described this '*énorme scène*' without adding, that in all his life he had never felt so ill-at-ease. At length the King, who had not sat down, advanced, took hold of Madame de Combalet, who had remained at the Queen's feet, and pulling her up by the shoulders, said she had heard enough and should withdraw." Outside the door the weeping woman met her uncle, the Cardinal, and so terrified him by the story

she told, that he considered whether it would not be the better course to turn back.

Meantime Louis was respectfully but in no pleasant mood reproaching his mother with her breach of faith and good manners. When, however, he said that he should order the Cardinal not to enter, Marie, who was playing a part, professed her desire to see and "pardon" Richelieu, but solely on the ground that the King regarded him as indispensable. Then the Cardinal was admitted, knelt on one knee, began to speak, and with a good grace was ordered to rise. But by degrees the tide of Marie's wrath flowed higher and higher, until she again broke out into furious abuse. She called him ungrateful, a rogue, a traitor, declaring that, for his own behoof and that of his kin, he had deceived his King and betrayed the State. So impetuous was the stream, that Louis, overcome by surprise, grief, and anger, could not stay its unbroken flow; and finally, the raging Queen turned out the Cardinal and forbade him ever to see her again. Louis, after rebuking his unruly mother, withdrew, and St. Simon records that on reaching his temporary abode, he threw himself on the bed, and was so swollen with rage that in an instant all the buttons on his pourpoint fell with a rattle on the floor.

Queen Marie had been acting a part. The King was to be forced by a histrionic display, based, no doubt, on genuine hatred, to choose between his mother and his minister; and so certain were the cabal of victory, that news of the Cardinal's disgrace had been sent to the Spaniards at Brussels!

They were wofully duped. The courtiers were exultant. The Queen-mother's *protégé*, Marillac, Keeper of the Seals, was confident that Richelieu's succession would fall to him, for had not Louis, apparently as part of the peace compact with his mother, signed a despatch that very day, appointing Marshal Marillac to the command of the army in Piedmont? The Cardinal himself, crushed in spirit by the redoubled blow

was eager to fly for safety to Havre, and was only detained by the earnest pleadings of his friend, Cardinal La Valette. But while Richelieu was trembling, and the Spanish faction drunk with joy, Louis XIII., taking counsel with young St. Simon, but most with himself, and having a hard alternative forced on his choice, determined to break with his mother and hold fast by his minister. St. Simon was empowered to send a message to the Cardinal directing him to follow the King to Versailles. The ecstasy of Richelieu, rescued, as it were, from death, was shown in the fact that, when the news-bearer, young De Tourville, father of the admiral who sixty years afterwards made the British Channel ring with his name, delivered his joyful tidings, the Cardinal kissed him on both cheeks. Richelieu journeyed to Versailles, the faction was routed, and his power was established afresh as on a rock and never afterwards shaken. Marillac the Keeper was dismissed; Marillac the Marshal was arrested in his camp, after he had been a few hours in command; Beringhen, another plotter, fled to Holland; and Bassompierre, poor man, was lodged in the Bastille. Louis and his great servant formed a political partnership, which was only broken by death; and they continued to the last the twofold work they had begun—that of fastening firmly an absolute monarchy on France, and of laying broad and deep the foundations whereon a successor might build or try to build up her domination over the rest of Europe.

CHAPTER V.

THE IRON-MASTER.

WHEN Fabert, after obtaining his captaincy, returned from the Court to Metz, he did so for the simple reason that he was much wanted at home. His biographers hint at painful differences connected with the family property between himself and his father; but if they existed, there is no clue to their nature. It does appear, indeed, that at the end of 1629 he had somehow become possessed of the Château of Moulins, but it is also manifest, from deeds, that early in 1632 he transferred the seigneurie to his elder brother, François. Nor could the family jars, whatever they were, have been very serious, and it is far more likely that they had their origin in the obstinacy with which the young officer clung to his profession (which was enough to disturb the equanimity of the *maître-échevin*), than that they were caused by money or land. For at this very time M. de Desmoulins, having on his hands a piece of work which he could not do with profit, induced his son to relieve him of the burden and vexation by doing it himself. Briefly, the father leased to the son certain forges, foundries, and furnaces which he could not manage, although he had been trying his hand at the business for seven years, and thus the Captain and Sergeant-Major of Rambures became an Iron-master.

The works were planted down at the edge of the forest of Moyauvre, near the confluence of the little Conroy with the

Orne, the river which drains the whole plateau east of the hills bordering the right bank of the Meuse. Receiving affluents from the south as well as the west, it draws supplies from the lake region, whence issues the Yron, and the wide range between that stream and the village of Orne. Falling into the main river, these rivulets swell its volume as it flows into the Moselle, a few miles above Thionville, now once more Diedenhof, its ancient name. The elder Fabert, it may be noted, held the "*terre de Ville sur Yron*," not far from the old Roman station at "*Hattonville au passage*," and near the now well-known Mars la Tour, which he had once helped to besiege. It was in 1624 that he obtained a lease of the Forges of Moyœuvre, and they did not prosper. A dam, built in 1608, was broken by the floods, and the clever commissary of artillery thought he might try his hand at engineering. But he failed. The object was to retain a head of water which might be diverted into a canal running through the works, and bringing a regular supply of water-power to bear on the machinery. The enterprising Sheriff had not the knowledge requisite to build a solid structure, and his profits on the foundry were swallowed up in expenditure on the banks of the channel and the dam. The new lessee, who had studied practical engineering so far as it could be studied in siege operations and camps, and also architecture, was able to accomplish a task which had baffled his persevering sire. Having taken careful observations on the spot, he made his calculations and drew up his plans on the basis of the facts; and so ably was the work performed by his directions and under his eye, that, as Colonel Bonrelly testifies, what he calls the "*barrage-reservoir*" exists to-day in "the state in which it was left by Fabert." How long a period exactly was occupied in this labour is not clear, but begun in 1632, it was completed before 1635. Henceforth he had the waters of the Orne under control, and he was so successful in the methods

he employed to produce iron, that for several years the enterprise yielded a profit of sixty thousand livres; and I have somewhere read, but have mislaid the extract, the output of the forges of Moyœuvre, under his management, was greater than the yield of any other iron-works in Europe. It may well have been so, for ore, water, and wood abounded in the forest-land between the Moselle and the Meuse; and a man so capable as Fabert, and so thorough, was sure to make the most of the natural advantages ready to his hand. Like most good soldiers, he was essentially a man of business, and his triumphs in the valley of the Orne rank among the most pleasing in his honourable career.

Soon after his return home as Captain-Major, and probably animated by some hope that marriage would restore him to civil life, his father proposed that he should take to wife Claude de Clevant, the daughter of a neighbour. Although the match was made, as usual, by the elders, it so happened that the juniors found delight in each other's society, and thus, fortunately for them, the marriage may be called a love-match. But the seniors disputed about the lady's *dot*. Her grandfather had agreed to give her fifty thousand crowns, yet when he heard that Fabert, who made no secret of his intentions either to the lady or her parents, persisted in following the trade of soldier, the hard-headed old Lorrainer declared that he would only risk twenty thousand upon a captain adventurer, who might be killed in battle and leave his grand-daughter no refuge but the cloister. It was Fabert's frank avowal to Claude that he should raise a regiment with the money, and her ready assent, which aroused the anger of the grandsire. During the dispute over the contract he died, but his son and heir, Dominique, Seigneur de Clevant, and Captain-Provost of Pont à Mousson, was as fond of his gold as his father, and would not give more than twenty thousand crowns. Fabert did not hesitate; he had

pledged his word to Claude, and would not break it, or abandon the lady because she was to be less richly endowed. To their great content and happiness they were married in October 1631, and always had occasion to rejoice. The *dot* was not expended upon a regiment; it was invested in the Forges of Moyœuvre, and was returned tenfold before the ravages of war enforced the abandonment of that fruitful undertaking.

While he was yet courting the daughter of M. de Clevant, probably during the financial dispute, an incident occurred which may have inflamed the anger of the grandsire who could not be brought to part with his money to a soldier. A messenger arrived from King Louis directing Fabert to undertake a task which his daring and knowledge of the country fitted him to perform. An Imperialist garrison had got possession of Moyenvic, a strongish place near Marsal, both on the head-waters of the Seille; and as the French Court had a quarrel with the Duke of Lorraine, Henri of Bourbon, Duke of Verneuil, Bishop of Metz, was directed to revive his claim to that town—a mere pretext intended to colour the projected seizure. Fabert, ordered to reconnoitre the place, made his way in disguise as a peasant, drew a plan, suggested a scheme for its capture, and was empowered by the King, then at Paris, to try his device. He collected a small train of carts, laden with goods, and, driving one himself, intended to mass them on a drawbridge, and fasten it firmly down, so that a body of troops, which were to be hidden within reach, might storm in and overpower the garrison. The plan utterly failed, because the troops, through no fault of Fabert, who performed his part, were not brought up before daylight. The consequence was that the King had to come to Metz, and an army had to be employed in reducing Moyenvic. It was the initiation of a political stroke long meditated by the King and his minister—the reduction and virtual annexation of Lorraine.

The Day of Dupes had discomfited but not quelled the faction which was hostile to the policy and still more to the person of Richelieu. They still went on the assumption that Louis was not the master and colleague, but the cowering and terrified slave of the minister's caprices and enmities. The Queen was in secret communication with the Duke of Lorraine through Madame de Chevreuse, and also with the Spanish Court in Brussels. The Queen-mother had retired thither after she found that her hope of ruling was utterly vain, and exhaled her wrath in letters which she poured into France. Gaston first sulked, then he fled to Nancy, and actually married in secret, January 3rd, 1632, Margaret, the sister of the Duke; while that prince himself, who had raised men to aid the Emperor Ferdinand in his contest with Gustavus, returned to his domains and made them a rendezvous for the malcontents. Richelieu had an excellent intelligence department, and was not taken unawares. The victory of Leipzig, which had delivered Germany and brought the Swedes to the Rhine, made it also possible to act with energy in Lorraine; and the French monarch, who was well-informed, seized the opportunity to press heavily on its ruler. The surrender of Moyenvic was followed by a treaty which gave the French a much stronger place, Marsal, known also to our day as a fortress, though the new guns have greatly reduced its value. These transactions occurred when Fabert's married life was young; but, while he was sure not to neglect the Forges of Moyœuvre, we know that he watched alike closely the political and the military events, and was kept well informed by his friends at Court, and correspondents like Charnacé, the clever envoy who negotiated the treaty of subsidy with Gustavus. But until later, in 1632, he seems to have been exempt from official labours. Metz during the midwinter season was full of life and business, if not gaiety, Louis and the Cardinal both being residents in that city, and

a flux and reflux of envoys and deputations pouring through the gates. Among others came the Bishop of Wurzburg, to plead the cause of the Catholic League, and Gustavus Horn from the head-quarters of his King on the Rhine. Richelieu, not too well pleased with the triumphal march of the Swedish hero, subsidized him with one hand and the Duke of Bavaria with the other. But the whole purport of his policy would be missed if it were not understood that its end was to keep up discord in Germany, in order to facilitate the aggrandizement of France. He had no other aim. In 1631-2 he feared that Gustavus might enter Alsace, and, if his fear was well grounded, he might claim the merit of keeping him out; but he was not successful in preventing him from turning on Bavaria, an object the Marquis of Brézé was sent to obtain. Gustavus understood his business quite as well as Richelieu, and had he not been killed a few months later at Lutzen, the Cardinal might not have been able to realize his great and purely French design.

In the spring of 1632 Fabert was obliged to join his regiment, which had entered Lorraine, and formed part of an army under Effiat. Its purpose was to seize Philipsburg on the Rhine, but an intimation from Charnacé that Gustavus might not take it in good part stopped that project, and Effiat was ordered to expel the Spaniards from Trèves and restore the Elector-Bishop, whose attitude was that of benevolent neutrality, and something more, towards the Swedes and the French. Effiat, the honest Superintendent of Finances, and generally able man, thoroughly at one with the Cardinal, died of malignant fever in July, and before his successor, the Marshal d'Estrées, could reach the army, the Marquis d'Arpajou and Comte de Saxe, commanding *ad interim*, had begun the siege of Trèves. It was a minor operation, but the only one in which Fabert had a share in 1632, his first year of wedded life. Besides his ceaseless toil in the trenches, for he seems

to have acted as engineer, he distinguished himself in combat. The garrison broke out one dark summer's night, and surprised the Regiment of Rambures; but Fabert instantly led up Champagne, and striking hard in turn, drove the enemy back into the place. The covering division had beaten off a body of Spaniards who sought to frustrate the siege, the garrison capitulated, and the Bishop was restored—for a time.

While Fabert fought, or enjoyed a brief interval of home life with his Claude in the Moselle valley, the terrible French drama grew more sombre and bloody. Marshal Marillac, a confederate of the Queen-mother, was tried, condemned, and beheaded on evidence, as he said, which would not have warranted the whipping of a lackey. If so, then the liberty of French lackeys to plunder and oppress was extensive. Marillac had not what would now be called a trial, but it is plain enough that he had committed many acts which, under the laws, rendered him liable to death. It is said that he fell a victim to the personal vengeance of Richelieu. Possibly; but Richelieu, throughout his official career, intent solely on his great schemes, carried his life in his hand, and to avert death he struck first. Marillac, "*pont d'or*," as he was called in the Isle of Ré, because he advised that Buckingham should be allowed to embark quietly, was devoted to Marie de Médicis, and would have done her bidding—slain Richelieu, if ordered, as Richelieu slew him. Gaston, because he was the King's brother, and heir-apparent to the throne, knew that he did not risk his own life when, in 1632, he rode into France at the head of a body of cavalry, including some French nobles, but also any men he could rake together in Belgium, and endeavoured to provoke an insurrection to the cry of "Down with the Tyrant Richelieu!" He dragged into the fray the last Duke of Montmorency, who had his grievances; but neither in Burgundy, nor in Central France,

nor even in Languedoc, did Gaston receive the least popular support. That is a most tell-tale fact. The cruelty, harshness, and oppression of the King's Government was keenly felt, but the people knew that it was nothing when compared to the rule of the noblesse against whom the King and the Cardinal waged war. Richelieu won the popular heart when he ruthlessly destroyed the feudal castles and pulverized the feudal power; and the deliverance from that daily tyranny was a set-off which more than overbalanced his own. Gaston's insurrection ended at Castelnaudary, where, in a foolhardy display of mere valour, Montmorency was wounded and taken; and when the brilliant and generous *grand seigneur* was condemned to die, Gaston basely deserted him, and bought his own safety, as usual, by betraying his friends. He fled the country once more, no doubt, but he fled because he feared that the King had obtained proof of the offence he persistently denied—his clandestine marriage with Margaret of Lorraine. A meaner and shabbier man than this Bourbon prince it would be hard to find. Montmorency's execution, when Gaston got off scot free, is a deep stain on the reign of Louis and the Cardinal; but it was a stroke in the game, and those who are never tired of applauding Richelieu for his life-work, the unification and aggrandizement of France, should be the last to repudiate the cost. It is impossible to see how, considering the material through which and with which they had to work, the King and the minister could have achieved the end attained by any other means than such as those which they employed. All, and they are many, who boast that Richelieu was "the incarnation of France," which in many respects he was, are bound to accept him as a whole; while they exult in the glory they must also bear their share in the shame, and admit that the splendour of his genius and his work cast an appallingly black shadow, not only on his own time, but through the centuries even to our own day.

The long-cherished plan of snatching Lorraine alike from Duke Charles IV. and the Empire was pushed forward vigorously in 1633; and accomplished by intricate negotiations and their sanction, superior force. The Duke, who had no means of resistance, and whose Spanish friends were still remote struggling through the Alps from Milan, was required to place Nancy in "deposit," which meant give it up, and surrender several other places not yet in French hands. The contest between him and Richelieu was one of diamond cut diamond, and the keener performer won. It is instructive to note, that when the Lorrainers objected that if the Duke consented to the terms he would be placed under the ban of the Empire by his suzerain, the Kaiser, the Cardinal's answer was that the suzerainty of the Duchy only pertained to the Emperor by virtue of an antique usurpation of a possession belonging to the crown of France, and the further assertion that the King intended to re-establish his monarchy in its "*primale grandeur*," in fact, annex what was known as the ancient Austrasia, which, if accomplished, would at least carry the borders of France to the Rhine. Thus we touch again one of the many roots of the inveterate Franco-German dispute which is so much older than the Napoleons and Bismarcks. The Duke, after much haggling, and more than one dramatic interlude, was compelled to submit. He had come into the French camp with a safe-conduct, after he had signed the treaty, and when he paltered in keeping faith, Richelieu did not exactly detain him as a prisoner, but would not allow him to depart. Finally, fearing a definite arrest and indefinite imprisonment, the enraged Duke gave the proper order to his people on the 25th of August, and the next day Louis XIII. entered Nancy at the head of his troops.

It is significant of the estimation in which Fabert was held by the King, that he entrusted him with the task of drawing up the police regulations so much needed to secure a peaceful

occupation. Fabert, a Lorrainer himself, was as well acquainted with the temper of the people as he was with the character of the French soldiers. He not only framed an excellent set of rules, but made it plain that they must be obeyed; and the consequence was that the markets were well supplied, because the peasants were protected, and the soldiers made to pay for all they required. There were no troubles in Nancy, although the population hated the intruders. We can well imagine that Madame Claude may have journeyed from Metz to the Lorraine capital in these days and brightened her soldier's home by her presence. The extruded Duke, after lingering for a while in the hill country, rode off at the head of a small body of horse and foot to fight under the flag of the Empire, and his own, for in the end he became a leader of free companions, a lordly freebooter, after the fashion of Mansfeldt, and lived long at the cost of the Rhine bordering countries. When he had gone, and alleging his flight as a pretext, the French overran the whole Duchy, and passed the Vosges to seize Saverne and Hagenau, which had been bestowed on him by the Emperor. Fabert had a share in the warfare, distinguishing himself, as usual, at the capture of Bitché and La Mothe, the latter a castle on a rocky eminence, the site of which is marked in contemporary maps, and is still visible in the valley of the Mouzon, a few miles south of Neufchâteau, as an isolated hill, useful, from its height, to the trigonometrical surveyor. The castle, like scores of robber strongholds in Lorraine and all over France, has utterly disappeared.

During the siege of Bitché, which was defended by a fighting and scientific Capucin, the Père Eustache, Fabert had a characteristic difference with the commander of the army, the veteran Marshal la Force. It is related that La Force directed Fabert to arrest and deliver to the Provost three soldiers accused of robbery. He found two, and led

them himself to the Marshal, but refused to hand them over to the Provost, alleging that the right of punishing them, if guilty, belonged to the regiment of Rambures. The Marshal, piqued by the conduct of his subordinate, told him that he should serve no longer in his army. Thereupon Fabert, who felt that his regiment as well as himself had been unjustly treated, and a rule of the service set at naught, went at once to the King and begged permission to resign his commission. But when he narrated the incident in the camp, Louis, who knew well the army customs, directed him to keep his post as Captain-Major, and gave him leave either to stay in Paris until Rambures could be sent on other service, or return to Lorraine. He choose the latter course, and reached the camp at La Mothe in time to act on the staff of Arpajou, who knew his value, and to employ his engineering knowledge with immense effect. When La Mothe fell, the Marshal, of course, did not name his able subordinate; but he bore no malice, and soon after recognized amply the merits of an officer, whose only offence was that he would not surrender the right and duty of maintaining discipline which pertained to the regiment in which he served. The incident, however, shows that the principles regulating the relations of subordinates to superiors were very ill-defined in the French army at that date.

Having obtained practical possession of Lorraine, and some sort of footing in Alsace, French policy required or desired the reduction of Diedenhof, or Thionville. The Père Joseph, who, although he held no office, exerted frequently much influence on war as well as politics, was a great campaign-maker—on paper. It was said that he and some other courtiers were, in this easy fashion, always conquering “the Turk.” He once laid down a plan of campaign for the instruction of Bernhard of Saxe Weimar, who drily remarked that war would be much simplified if a general could take

cities by touching their names with a finger upon a map. Late in the summer of 1634 Richelieu directed Fabert to reconnoitre Thionville, which lay not remote from the iron works at Moyœuvre; but when he presented his plan of the fortress to the Cardinal, the Père Joseph, who knew nothing about the matter, threw doubts on its correctness in such an imperious style that Fabert, who was touched in his tenderest point, felt bound to test his drawings by a second inspection of the place. The consequence was that he fell into the hands of the Spaniards; for the Governor, noticing the strange horseman, detached part of his escort to capture him; and as Fabert, seeing his danger, yet not wishing to seem a fugitive, rode off slowly towards the Moselle, his pursuers were able to reach him as he was entering the ferry boat. Fortunately for him he had torn up his drawings, and flung away his case of mathematical instruments, so that there was no evidence against him. The Governor, polite but resolute, kept his prisoner, who, nevertheless, found some mode of communicating his mishap, and the story he had told to the Don, to the Baron de Grateloup, an officer of the regiment of Piedmont; and at a later stage, by an ingenious artifice and a singular kind of sympathetic ink laid on with a toothpick, he sent a similar account to Madame Fabert. Taken first to Luxemburg, he was finally lodged in a prison cell in Brussels, where he remained for some months, during which period he exercised his ingenuity in obtaining what was rigorously denied, pens, paper, and ink, and at one time was obliged to take the desperate step of refusing to eat until he was allowed to draw up a petition to his judges. Solitude sharpened his naturally keen wits, and he was able to devise expedients which turned the obstacles in his path. But his friends were over zealous. The Baron de Grateloup devised a scheme for carrying him off by force; and a young friend, M. de Vion, was foolish enough to offer a bribe to the legal functionary in

charge of the case, a proceeding which nearly proved fatal. King Louis took up the cause of his officer at once, but month after month passed away, and still the Spanish Government refused to release the prisoner. It so happened, however, that a certain Don Juan de Manasses, wearing a disguise, had been captured while looking into the state of Leucate, a town on the Mediterranean; and Richelieu let it be known at Brussels and Madrid that Don Juan would fare badly if Fabert were condemned. At all events, when other means failed, Louis XIII. wrote directly to the Cardinal-Infanta who governed the Low Countries, demanding his release, and the request was instantly granted. After a detention of more than two months he was allowed to depart, and rode into France with his faithful friend Grateloup. It was inevitable that he should personally thank his King—that would have been done by any officer; but it was characteristic of Fabert that he should transmit a handsome sword to M. Cloud, the legal personage who refused the too zealous Vion's gold, as a token of the admiration he felt for that gentleman's incorruptibility.

Freedom soon brought him employment; and the post to which he was appointed was that of Commandant in his native city. An immense and grotesque quarrel which raged fiercely through the autumn of 1633, and did not get properly settled for a year after, had broken out between the Duke of Epemon and the Archbishop of Bordeaux. The Archbishop excommunicated the Duke and his guards, and the Duke, seeking his antagonist, deprived him of his head-covering in the street, and punched him in the stomach with his cane. The quarrel had endured so long that all sorts of authorities were involved in the whirlpool, and finally the Pope and the King's council were obliged to interfere, and reprimand both these turbulent spirits. Richelieu seized the occasion to make the Duke resign the government of Metz, but he

bestowed it on the Cardinal de la Valette, who desired to have Fabert for his commandant. But so apprehensive was the Captain lest he should be shut up in a fortress during the great war, now plainly imminent, that he wished to decline the offer, and would have done so had not the King stepped in with a peremptory order. So for a season he was stationed near his home; and had the verses been then written, he might have said to his Claude, to justify his burning passion for active service in the field—

“I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.”

His special military business at Metz was to place that fortress in a complete state of defence. In the preceding year Wallenstein, who had engaged in a plot against the Emperor, was himself assassinated by that Emperor's order, and the hopes of the Protestants revived. But in the autumn Piccolomini had the great good fortune to defeat Bernhard and capture Horn, near Nordlingen, and those hopes were destroyed for a season by the victory. The French minister acted at once with more than his usual energy and craft, and sought to extract gains for France from the confusion and suffering which prevailed in Germany. He negotiated treaties with the Dutch and the Swedes; he induced Gaston of Orleans to return to France; he reformed his military administration by concentrating the transaction of war business into one office; he tried again, but failed in great part, to establish a relatively sound fiscal and financial system; and he raised larger bodies of troops than France had ever possessed before. His master, by his advice, designed to enter openly, as a principal, into the huge contest which had been raging since 1618, and to strike down if he could Spain and Austria, in the hope that the boundaries of France might be pushed to the Rhine. It

was because Fabert knew what great designs were afoot that he fretted in his prison, and longed to quit Metz for service in the field. None the less did he apply his whole heart to the task which he had to perform at Metz. He was so diligent that in three months old works were renewed or repaired, fresh defences were added, ample supplies stored in the magazines, the garrison was well-trained—a result sure to ensue wherever Fabert commanded—and Metz, not only from its strategical position, but in itself, was made one of the strongest fortresses in the kingdom. The ancient municipal freedom had of course been destroyed; the *maître échevin* and his council gave way to a Parlement, and the principal privilege preserved by the chief magistrate was, that he had a right to address the King with his head covered, a right François Fabert some years later successfully insisted on. To the horror of the Court officials, Louis XIII. fully acknowledged the right which he had accorded when, despite the strenuous protests of the elder Abraham Fabert, the venerable institutions which had their roots in the history of Metz as a free city were abolished and a Parlement arose in their stead. Yet this body did not fulfil the expectations of its founders, who required obedience, and its members stood out so long that as a punishment they were banished to Toul.

When the plans of the French Government were ripe, the Spaniards obligingly furnished a pretext for war. They regained possession of Trèves, and carried off the Archbishop as a prisoner. Louis XIII. at once declared war in set form, and this declaration is memorable because it was the last delivered by a herald. It was on the 12th May, 1635, that the King directed Pierre Gratiolet, whose heraldic title was Alençon, to visit Brussels and declare war according to the ancient forms. Packing up his official garments, he set out forthwith, and reached the neighbourhood of the Low

Country capital at nine o'clock on the morning of the 19th. He sent his "trumpet" to sound *la chamade* at the gate while he himself donned his coat of arms, put on his toque, or collar, and unpacked his bâton of office, adorned with *fleurs de lis*. When he solemnly advanced in this guise, he was met by a brother of the craft, no less a person than Toison d'Or, who told him that the Prince—the Cardinal-Infanta was Prince Ferdinand of Austria, the brother of Philip IV.—would give him audience, but at the same time he implored him to lay aside his heraldic raiment, lest the sight of so great a curiosity should create a tumult. Alençon was stiff about his clothes, and the colloquy was so protracted that the two heralds did not enter the city until noon, when the Frenchman found a hospitable refuge in the house of his compeer. Meanwhile the Council had met to debate the weighty question—should the cartel be or be not received. Some opined that it should, alleging that he who refused to hear such a document read thereby confessed his weakness, but others, with more reason, held that princes should not listen to declarations of war, for if they contained offensive expressions the Prince could not answer them with dignity. In short, the Council could not make up its little mind, so a messenger of rank kept trotting to and fro between the Council and the herald; and as Alençon, not unnaturally, grew impatient, two other heralds, Hainault and Gueldres, were sent to amuse and quiet the much-tried man. One foolishly asked him if he had not a letter for the Infanta, but when he drew out the terrible document, the questioner refused to take it and fled, while the *sergent-major* in attendance retired in haste lest it should be read in *his* presence. Six o'clock had struck, when, wearied out, Alençon in full panoply at length mounted his horse, and summoned the three Low Country heralds who were before the house to accept service of his declaration. None would

take it or hear it read. A crowd had assembled, and, as the shadows lengthened over the public square, Alençon, driven to extremities, turning to the people and the Heralds, and brandishing his parchment, shouted out that it was a declaration of war from the King his Master against the Cardinal-Infanta, and then threw the precious document on the ground in the Place du Sablon. The heralds forbade any one to touch it, and Alençon, vexed and indignant, gathered up his missive, and rode back towards France. Yet he was determined to leave it on hostile soil. When he reached the frontier, near Rouille, he planted a post before the Church, and thereon he fixed his declaration, while his attendant trumpet once more sounded *la chamade* ! A most curious and ineffectual proceeding, so ludicrous in all its parts, that it was the death-blow to the time-honoured practice of sending a herald, properly accoutred, to denounce war according to the ancient forms, which had no longer any vitality behind them. No herald was ever again torn from his quiet home and interesting antiquarian studies to be sent on such a bootless errand ; and here in Brussels, May 1635, a venerable custom expired with a comic flicker, having long outlived the institutions which gave it life and vigour.

Yet Alençon bore a missive quite polite in form. The sole reason alleged as a warrant for war was that the Cardinal-Infanta had refused to liberate the Elector and Archbishop of Trèves, captured while he was under the protection of France, and therefore King Louis declared that he was resolved "*de tirer raison par les armes de cette offense.*" The best commentary on the hollowness of the heraldic parade is, that two French marshals, at the head of a large army, had invaded the Spanish dominions before Alençon started on his mission ; and that on the day after he rode indignantly out of Brussels a weak Spanish force was actually defeated at Avein, not far from Liege.

It was the outbreak of a desolating war from the gates of Basel, indeed from the Lyonnais, to the North Sea, that terminated Fabert's career as an Iron-master. During the few months spent in command at Metz, he had taken good care to store up large quantities of iron in the arsenal, and had done his best to secure the Messin from the raiders, who shot out parties from Thionville, Trèves, Sierk, and Luxemburg. His days were spent in augmenting the defences of Metz, filling her storehouses, and in riding abroad at the head of a chosen troop of light horse to watch over and protect the cultivated country within the sphere of his command; but he could not, at a later period, prevent the Spanish marauders from destroying the works at Moyœuvre, and putting an end to that profitable speculation. Fabert had to be content with his gains, which he lent, apparently, to the ever-needy Government, now more than ever pressed to find ready money with which to defray the daily cost of a war waged by means of large subsidies to foreign princes as well as by military operations framed on an unprecedented scale. The annual outlay of the War Office for several years was certainly not less, and frequently more, than five millions and a half, out of a revenue, including loans, of fourteen millions sterling, expressed in the values of that day and not in those of our own.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STAFF OFFICER.

RICHELIEU'S magnificent military schemes for 1635, the cause of such a vast expenditure, nearly all failed. The invasion of the Low Countries, undertaken in concert with the Prince of Orange, was disastrous. The people then, as they have been since, were called upon by an absolute government to rise and vindicate their liberty, but the horrible sack of Tirlemont, at the outset, shut every gate and provoked universal rage ; the confederates could not even take Louvain ; the French had no communications with France, and when the Spaniards seized the fort on the Rhine, once the stronghold of the famous robber partizan chief Schenk, threatening the Dutch communications, the armies broke up. The French host had dwindled down to a few thousands, and the greater part of the survivors were brought back to France by sea. Marshal Créquy and the Duke of Savoy did not fare much better in Italy ; and, as we shall see, a campaign on the Rhine was almost a complete disaster ; while it was only the Duke of Rohan, by far the best French general then existing, who conducted a campaign in the Grisons and the Valtelline so finely, that it presents an example of mountain warfare which is studied by soldiers to this day.

After the Franco-Dutch campaign had disastrously broken down, an army was assembled in Lorraine, and placed

under Bernhard and the Cardinal La Valette, consisting of the "Weimariens," as they were called, the wreck of Nordlingen, Swedes and Germans, all stout, ferocious, and unscrupulous soldiers, and a picked body of French troops, which included the "Maison du Roi," both horse and foot. King Louis named the staff; Colonel Hepburn, Turenne, then twenty-five years old, and the Count of Guiche, afterwards Marshal Grammont acting as *Maréchal-de-Camp*, and Fabert being appointed *Sergent-de-bataille*. There was also another soldier present destined to be famous—Guébriant, a man of high character and rare faculties. Fabert was delighted at the prospect now opening out before him, but sinister influences were at work, and before the troops had been collected, he learned to his chagrin that a M. de Vignolles was to have the coveted post, and that he was only to be an aide-de-camp to La Valette. Whether, as some pretend, his general looked on him at first as a spy of the King, or whether the monarch's evident esteem, as others say, excited the jealousy of Richelieu and the Père Joseph, matters little. It is certain that the former did not like men who were not his steady adherents and servants, and also that the Capucin nourished a strong prejudice against Fabert. He was now six-and-thirty years old; he had given faithful service; he was a soldier accomplished far above the level of his time, but he was not a noble, a supple courtier, or a relation of the minister, and he was superseded. He was deeply hurt, but he found support in the reflection, which expressed the principle of his life, that it was better to deserve honours than obtain rank and distinction without desert; so he repressed some natural vexation, and frankly accepted the inferior position from which, until the death of the Père Joseph, he could never emerge.

The new army was not got together a moment too soon. Piccolomini was already on the Flemish frontier threatening

Picardy ; Gallas, who owed his rapid promotion to the share he had in Wallenstein's destruction, had entered the Palatinate. Mansfeldt, now Imperialist, besieged the Swedes in Mainz ; while some months earlier, the Emperor had succeeded in negotiating a treaty of Prague with Saxony, Brandenburg, and the greater part of the German Protestants. The Franco-Weimarian army was to drive Gallas over the Rhine, relieve Mainz, cross the river and, if possible, effect a junction with the Landgraf of Hesse-Cassel, the only powerful Protestant leader who had not made a peace with the Emperor. It was a task beyond their strength, and even Richelieu was so terrified by the apprehension that "*vivres*" might fail and ruin the army, that he enjoined the greatest caution, while the Père Joseph described the project as a "glorious enterprise."

Less than twenty-thousand strong, they marched from Saarbruck on the 28th of July, and were just in time to relieve Deux-Ponts, besieged by Gallas. That general fell back on the road so often traversed before and since, the war-path which leads through Landstuhl and Kaiserslautern. Luckily for him he found a traitor in the first-named place, and was thus able to garrison the castle, cover his retreat on Worms, and bar the direct road. The combined army did not rapidly pursue. At this early stage, such were the defective methods of those days, they were brought to a stand because the baggage had not come up from Saarbruck. During the halt provisions and forage became scarce ; the French guards, horse and foot, almost mutinied, not only because they missed their comforts, but because they were called upon to encamp or bivouac, as we surmise. The Maison du Roi—they learned better in after years—were highly indignant, and stood out against being degraded to the level of "common soldiers." It needed all the tact and eloquence of Bernhard, who was the soul of the expedition, to overcome a spirit of

insubordination, which was due in part to the horror with which the French, then and afterwards, regarded a German campaign. Fabert played a part also in restoring a proper tone to the discouraged army. They set forward early in August, and, leaving the hostile fort at the entrance of the wooded defile of Kaiserslautern on their right, they gained Kreuznach and the valley of the Nahe by a detour through Kusel. Nearly a week was consumed in this operation, which led them to Bingen, a place soon captured. Thence they moved on Mainz, the wind of their approach driving off Mansfeldt, and established themselves on both banks of the Rhine. Here they lingered idly for many weeks, during which interval negotiations were carried on with the Landgraf which led to no result. The fact was, that the politic arrangement concluded by the Imperialists at Prague had for the time thwarted Richelieu's scheme of a junction with Hesse. Fabert, whose knowledge of German made him so useful, was sent to sound the Circles of Franconia and Swabia, but he found them unwilling to risk anything at a moment when the rout of Nordlingen was fresh in every memory, and the Swedes, without Gustavus, were the only weighty counterpoise to the Emperor; while Oxenstiern had not yet become known to the public as a man of power.

In the meantime Gallas, secure on the Rhine, demonstrated daily the rashness of Bernhard's audacious advance. He poured his partisans into the Palatinate countries, eat up and destroyed their resources, and of course prevented the transport of stores from the magazines of Saarbruck to Mainz. He tried to burn the boat-bridge at Mainz, by sending fire-rafts down stream; here Fabert staved off the threatening ruin. The allies were still on both banks, but they had no food for man or horse, and a retreat became an imperative necessity—a retreat over nearly two hundred miles

of wasted country, with an active enemy on their flank. In order to deceive Gallas, if possible, young Turenne and Feuquières led a body of cavalry towards Frankfort, and gained a brilliant success over an Imperialist force which rashly quitted its entrenchments to meet them. In that charge rode a remarkable young man, De Thou, whose tragic fate in after years so many have lamented and still lament. He was serving under Arnauld of Andilly, in what we should call the Commissariat, and, like Bishop Walker at the Boyne, "had no business there." He was "naturally so courageous," says Andilly his superior, "that he could not resist the temptation to affront a peril which his profession did not oblige him to incur. He was hit in the right arm, and was rather ashamed than vain of his wound." Andilly's son, known afterwards as the Abbé Arnauld, however, puts the incident in a slightly different light. He says that De Thou, "priding himself on his bravery, like the rest, had an arm broken by a musket-ball, and for recompense, instead of pity, we said *Qu'allait-il faire là ?*"

The ride towards Frankfort was a mere feint, and the army, traversing the Rhine, marched off on the 16th of September to Kreuznach, where they crossed the Nahe and halted to await Duke Bernhard, who was engaged in reinforcing the garrison of Mainz. It is stated that when the Swedes, unwilling to be left, were on the verge of mutiny, Bernhard quelled it by drawing his sword and killing a lieutenant-colonel who was the ringleader. In any case he did leave a garrison, more or less in an unwholesome temper, and joined the army on the Nahe on September 20th. "What I chiefly noticed in Duke Bernhard," says the austere Andilly, "besides his great vigilance, foresight, and method, was a good sense and courtesy which might have made him pass rather for an Italian than a German." But we see that he could be rough enough on a decisive occasion, which also

shows great good sense in its way. It was easy to retreat into the valley of the lower Nahe; not so easy to get further towards Lorraine. For the Austrian detachments were far out, and one blocked the road through Meisenheim to Kusel. Turenne, who commanded the advanced guard, which included Rambures and its captain-major, Fabert, met them near Odernheim, on the Glan, so far north had the Imperialists marched out. After a brief cannonade, Turenne leading the Light Horse, and Fabert Rambures, attacked and broke the Austrians, taking thirteen guns. The victory, except in so far as it rebuffed the enemy, did not improve the prospects of an army which could neither march by the direct road home, nor appease its hunger by drawing on its own magazines in Meisenheim. Even the captured artillery was only an additional impediment. "We are in a strange fix," said Bernhard. "Yes," answered Fabert, "but honour is won by overcoming great difficulties," and he suggested a plan of retreat on the only road open. He proposed to bury the cannon, burn all superfluous baggage, and move off to the right, that is gain the Nahe, and march by Sobernheim up the right bank. He calculated that the Croats would stop to pillage the abandoned waggons, and that at least a march would be gained. The plan was only partially adopted. The guns and carts were retained, but the army moved swiftly off into the hill country through which the Nahe bores its way. Then, as the enemy became more enterprising, little by little the baggage was sacrificed, and La Valette burnt his own carriage. The famished troops tramped on night and day, and still the guns were dragged on by double teams, so fearful was the French commander lest his enemies at Court should make their loss a weapon of attack against him.

It was not until the 24th of September, the ninth day of the retreat, that the Allies, diminished to some ten thousand men, were able to cross the Nahe and rest near Birkenfeld,

so far to the westward had they been driven. Here the artillery was thrown into a lake, and without guns or transport train, the weary and hungry soldiers once more plodded away. The Imperial general still hoped to cut them off by marching on Vaudrevange, now Vallerfangen, near Saarlouis, where there was a castle and point of passage—one of the feudal castles in Lorraine which was to be destroyed. But Gallas misused his great opportunities in this campaign. Marching by night from Birkenfeld, and throughout the next day, the Allies came in sight of the Saar and the towers of Vaudrevange on the 26th. The Imperialists were too late, and their horsemen did not ride up until the main body had crossed the river protected by the guns of the castle. But the enemy closed upon the rear-guard. Turenne, mindful of Gustavus, met them with a line of alternate squadrons of horse and companies of foot, which, with the aid of a reinforcement brought up by Fabert, enabled the rear-guard to hold its own and cross the river intact. They were not even yet in safety, for the Imperialists also got over the Saar in the night, and moving between Vaudrevange and the Nied, managed to place a strong body of horse in the woods on the flank of the allied line of march. The French infantry, except four hundred musketeers under Guébriant, then a captain in the Guards, had gone forward led by Colonel Hepburn and Fabert. But when the Imperial horse dashed out of the coverts, they were encountered and routed by the French cavalry, which still retained its superiority in actual combat, and by the telling fire of Guébriant's infantry. That brilliant stroke finished the campaign; the next day the Allies crossed the Nied, and moved by Boulay upon the Seille, whence Fabert was despatched to hasten a supply of provisions from Metz.

Riding into that city, he first ordered the bakers to provide an ample quantity of bread, and inform him so soon as it was

ready for transport. Ragged and shirtless, he entered his own house, and was so strange a figure that his wife could barely recognize him. She brought him clothes, and he took some food, but was so worn out that he fell into a deep sleep in his chair. There he slumbered until word came that the convoy was ready, when, roused with difficulty, he mounted a fresh horse, and gladdened the hungry band of wanderers at Magny on the Seille by bringing them plentiful store of provend.

At the time, and since, there has been much glorification over this retreat, which certainly tried the French in many ways, and taught the Maison du Roi some useful lessons. Fabert in the prime of life, and Turenne in early manhood, among others, gained renown by their conduct. The Père Barre, quoting from the Memoires of M. de Termes, *Homme de Confiance de M. le Maréchal de Fabert*, tells a characteristic anecdote to illustrate the Captain-Major's ceaseless activity during the retreat. "He would have died of weakness and hunger," says the narrator, "had not d'Acqueville, a gentleman attendant on Cardinal La Valette, cared for him." The kind d'Acqueville, it seems, frequently waylaid Fabert as he rode to and fro every day, hither and thither, and tendered bread and wine. As to his cool and hardy courage that was well known, but the fashion in which he rode up towards the enemy when reconnoitring earned him a special title in the army. He was styled "*Quêteur de coups de Mousquet*," a habit which never left him, so that what in others might seem bravado was in him a second nature. We may observe, by way of contrast, that there was another man of note or notoriety in the Mainz army, Baradas, who had been the "favourite" of a season. He raised a fine regiment of infantry, says the Abbé Arnould, led it himself, and inscribed on his colours "*fiat voluntas tua*," in sign of submission to fortune and the King, as the Abbé thinks, adding with a touch of malice, that the poor man was ill enough during the

retreat; and also that disgrace had rendered him "*civil et honnête, d'orgueilleux et peu caressant qu'il étoit pendant sa faveur.*" Baradas was twice tried by his royal master, and each time found untrustworthy or wearisome. Saint Simon, whom he made a Duke, was really the only favourite whose good manners, sound sense, and manly independence won the permanent liking and esteem of the King; but even he had to be sacrificed to policy.

The offensive campaigns devised by Richelieu, except that in the Valtelline, had not only gone to water, but had brought the enemy to the borders of France. Duke Charles broke into Lorraine, occupied the attention of La Force, indeed compelled him to entrench himself at Epinal, now again a part of the new French "lines," and captured St. Mihiel on the Meuse. Matters were in that state when La Valette finished his retreat upon Metz, followed by Gallas, who seized Vaudrevange and St. Avold and reduced Saarbruck. Richelieu was seriously ill at this time, and Louis betook himself to Lorraine to besiege the "revolted" city. In order to face the Austrian counter-stroke the services of several thousand Swiss had been secured, troops were collected in Champagne, and the *lan* and *arrière-lan*, the old feudal levies, were summoned to horse. St. Mihiel was, of course, obliged to surrender at discretion, and the defenders were rigorously not to say barbarously treated, because Richelieu held that the terrible example would discourage, if not prevent, further "revolts" in Lorraine—that is, explosions of loyalty to their own ruler Duke Charles, and evidences of the hatred they bore to the French invaders whose sway they detested. It was while the King was encamped before St. Mihiel that La Valette sent Fabert there to render an account of the Rhine expedition, and especially to counteract the allegations of the Maison du Roi, still angry at having been degraded to the level of "common soldiers." He accomplished his task by modestly telling the

truth, so that La Valette, when he, in turn, reached the royal head-quarters, found his path smoothed, and he returned to Metz without loss of credit.

King Louis went back to Paris depressed and discouraged leaving the generals to do the work which he would have preferred to do himself; but as Richelieu was anxious to have him within easy reach, the military leaders and the Cardinal's courtiers virtually hustled his Majesty out of Lorraine. He had, in fact, a bitter experience of what he called the "levity of the French," and the conduct of the *noblesse volontaire* made him angry and ashamed. Nothing could be done with the gentlemen of the *ban* and *arrière-ban*, who when ordered to march swore that they were being sent to destruction and would not budge, notwithstanding, he writes, "the harangues, promises, flatteries, and menaces which I addressed to them." Richelieu's reply was characteristic and wise. "I cannot sufficiently sympathize with the sorrow of your Majesty over the levity of the French," he wrote. "If my life would alleviate your grief,"—he was ever offering his life—"I would heartily resign it. Your predecessors have had the same troubles, those who come after you will have to experience them; and still, none the less, affairs will go on." A reflection which must often have occurred to the minister himself when, beset by defeat, disappointment, and deadly perils, he was "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," from which his resolute spirit rebounded more resolute, inventive, and terrible than ever. In an earlier letter to the King, written after a slight jar in their relations, he says, referring to the mutations of warfare, "For the rest, greater results are often obtained by patience, so needful on some occasions, than by combats. For that reason, the French nation, naturally impatient, are considered by every one (*tout le monde*) less fit for war than those peoples who, not being so lively, have more

weight and are not so restless." Fontenay-Mareuil describes the gentlemen of the *ban* in terms similar to those used by the King; he adds, however, that they had plenty to eat and drink, and asserts that when they wanted to go nothing could stop them, for they insisted on being led to battle at once or permitted to depart in peace. It was one of these cavaliers who, when the Count of Cramail, a Montluc, was urging them to stay, shouted, "Don't listen to him, he has written a book." Some of those who rode home declared that they would prefer to be degraded to the status of *roturiers* rather than be killed by hunger. The Duke of Aumale, in his *Histoire des Princes de Condé*, has something to say by way of explanation. "These country gentlemen," he writes, "torn from their occupations, arriving without equipage, or servants, knowing neither how to tend their horses or clean their arms, incapable of foraging for themselves, and receiving rations irregularly, could not be of much use." In short, the feudal levy was no longer in harmony with the system of warfare, and it died of the campaign of 1635. As a consequence of this decisive test, the Duke remarks, the King increased his foreign troops—among them the twelve thousand Swiss who marched into Lorraine—and raised new regiments. Then the noblesse came in crowds, seeking commissions, and found the place denied them in the mob of the *arrière-ban*. So that this old institution died out, in 1635, as well as the practice of declaring war by a herald according to the ancient forms.

It was not only the country squires who gave trouble. Returning to Metz from St. Mihiel, Fabert learned that a portion of the cavalry refused to march, partly because they shared the common dread of service in Germany, a dread very real and long-lived, though it now sounds so strange, and partly because they wanted a month's pay. The officers,

it is said, counting on a refusal because the military chest was almost empty, declared that a default of payment would be regarded as permanent leave of absence. There was not time to call for supplies from Paris, so exigent were the malcontents. La Valette, therefore, appealed to Fabert, whose credit was so good that in one day he raised a hundred thousand crowns, and sent to the army, then in the field watching Gallas, a remittance which enabled the Cardinal to frustrate the *quasi* mutineers.

The Captain-Major had at the time even more serious work on hand. The Messin suffered from scarcity, being so much eaten up by armies. Merciless marauders of both sides had naturally restricted the supply sent to market; and it was Fabert's business to extract all the timid farmers could spare for the support of Metz and the Messin. He even went further afield into lands where there was a surplus, and the labour of six weeks enabled him to fill his granaries. In distributing his grain or flour, for Metz had plenty of mills, he did so at a fair price, and the only distinction he made between the noblesse and the common people, says the Père Barre, was to spare the former from the shame of making their distress public. Madame Fabert looked after the honest poor, "sending them money, as if it were due, or provisions as if they had paid for them." By various delicate devices of a similar kind, she also relieved the sufferers among the noblesse, so that both husband and wife stood higher than ever in the esteem of their fellow citizens. It was not the first nor the last famine, for the next, at a later stage, was far more horrible, and should rank among the costs of carrying the French frontier to the Rhine.

Rejoining the army after this useful labour, Fabert resigned his office as aide-de-camp to the General, and resumed his position as Captain-Major of Rambures. Gallas and the Duke of Lorraine were posted in a fortified camp among the

woods, lakes, and lakelets south of Dieuze, with the centre near Maizières on the road to Saverne, while the main body of the Allies was between Vic and Moyenvic on the upper waters of the Scille. Neither dared do anything, and each tried to wear out the other. The Allies could barely subsist, and the Imperials were dependent on the stores they had with them, for Turenne and Gassion cut off their convoys, kept them alarmed, and starved them out. One cold November night, Gallas, having nothing to eat, retired through the woods into Alsace, snatching Saverne on the road, while the Duke of Lorraine transferred himself and his bands into Franche Comté. The French and Swedes, even had they learned in time that Gallas had decamped, were in no condition to pursue him. As soon as a report of the event reached him, La Valette directed Fabert to ascertain the truth. Taking with him an escort of fifty troopers, he rode up the heights above Marimont, whence he saw a standing camp which made him doubt whether the enemy had gone. He did not spend much time in hesitation, but rode straight upon Maizières. All was still, there were no outposts, no signs of life; nothing visible in the valley but rows of tents. Unwilling to risk his escort in an ambuscade, he selected five troopers from the band, crossed the marsh land and entered the village. The truth was then clear enough—there were none in the place save the sick. Calling up the other troopers he made for the camp, which was only tenanted by the dead and dying. The Père Barre, quoting a letter from La Valette to his father, says that a Frenchman exclaimed, “Let us finish these fellows who massacred our men on the retreat from Mainz.” “That is barbarous,” said Fabert; “take a vengeance more noble and worthy of our nation.” And he at once gave up to the helpless enemy such provisions as his troopers had with them; later on, food and transport were brought into the camp; by dint of

kind treatment the men recovered, and the greater part, after the fashion of the day, willingly enrolled themselves in the troops of Duke Bernhard. The large-heartedness which ever distinguished Fabert will be recognized in an incident which lights up with a ray of humanity the dark shadows of these savage wars.

After the capture of Dieuze, where, under cover of night, he ascertained by personal inspection the state of the breach, Fabert returned to Metz. He discovered and frustrated a plot to betray the place to Duke Charles, but on this occasion the conspirators were allowed to go off scot-free. As usual La Valette sent him to Paris to report to the King, and during his sojourn in the capital he laid before his Majesty formal proposals suggesting two useful reforms. One was the formation of the "companies" of cavalry into squadrons and regiments, an arrangement borrowed from the practice of the Spaniards and Germans, and this was adopted promptly. Yet, meeting with opposition from the men of routine, it was only carried out after the lapse of two years. The other proposal, equally important, was a novelty which also found instant favour with the intelligent King, but was too radical for the Generals and the War-Office. Fabert desired to establish regiments of military workmen, something like what we called Sappers and Miners, and now Engineers. His experience of war and sieges brought him to a conclusion which was far in advance of his time. "It was only thirty-eight years afterwards," says Colonel Bourelly, "that Vauban was able to secure the creation of a special troop of this kind." Fabert, indeed, was in many respects the precursor of the great Vauban, who resembled him in thoroughness and an ever-present solicitude for the welfare of "the vast dumb populations," to use a phrase of Carlyle's.¹

¹ Wise changes in military administration moved slowly then, but we may note in passing, that the six *petits regiments* of infantry, such as

When he ceased to be an aide-de-camp, and remained simply Captain-Major in the Regiment Rambures, Fabert was still the right hand man of Cardinal La Valette. Returning to Lorraine early in 1636 from Paris, where he had been detained by the King and the minister, he was the bearer of despatches concerning the relief of certain places in Alsace held by French troops, and straitened for provisions by the Imperialists who were left there by Gallas when he re-crossed the Rhine in search of a new army. As Bernhard did not like the notion of employing his own bands in such an arduous enterprise, La Valette was persuaded to undertake it by Fabert, who readily engaged to transact the essential business of preparation and execution. A bold spirit and sure head were required to pass a heavy convoy through the hills in the depth of winter, but it was promptly done, apparently without molestation, and thus Kaiserberg, Colmar, and Schlestadt were rendered secure. It was more difficult to succour Hagenau, but the Count of Guiche and Fabert contrived to drive off the weak outlying parties which beset the roads, and to push a convoy into Hagenau, which provided sustenance sufficient to last until the spring. These incidents show how far the French had advanced already towards the occupation of Alsace as well as Lorraine. A similar movement had been begun on all the frontiers, for

Rambures, were raised to the level of the "old" regiments, and had twenty companies, divided into two battalions; while the Gardes Françaises were increased from twenty to thirty companies, or three battalions. The cavalry, light and heavy, were shedding their armour piece by piece; and the *dragon*, or dragoon, who, although "invented" nearly a hundred years earlier, was still a novelty in France, wore none except a casque, or pot helmet. The "new" dragoons of this period, says M. Henri Martin, were formed to fight the light Slavonian and Hungarian cavalry in the German and Spanish armies, and were "the first really light horse we (the French) ever had." The artillery had a "grand master," but a most imperfect organization, if the then existing, shiftless practices deserve that large name.

the characteristic of the policy pursued by the King and the Cardinal was the steady acquisition of territory. The border line, whatever the ups and downs of warfare, was steadily pushed forward from year to year.

After his winter's toil, Fabert enjoyed some weeks of repose in Metz, while his immediate chief warmed himself in delusive court sunshine, and fluttered about the Hôtel Rambouillet. He was an urbane but somewhat timid gentleman, who, having no special military abilities, would have done better had he taken orders and become a dignitary of the Church. Nor could he contend successfully in the race of ambition with rough soldiers like La Meilleraye, who had some faculty as well as devotion to the Cardinal-Duke. The King flattered and Richelieu applauded the man whom the courtiers called the "cardinal-valet," but he was never sure of his position or free from alarm. That was unfortunate for Fabert, whose only sure and steadfast friend was Louis himself, and Louis's favour, it has been well observed, was not the best security for advancement; and so it came to pass that at the age of thirty-seven, although he had shown his great capacity in so many ways, he was still only a Captain-Major in a marching regiment, while younger and much less able men held high commands. But then they were all *noblesse d'épée*, and Fabert was a *roturier*, who did not, like Gassion, for example, belong by birth even to the *noblesse de robe*. It must not be supposed that he meditated on these things, or looked on them from the modern point of view, or that his rare intervals of home life were clouded by repinings at fortune. He is far more likely to have been occupied in considering how the lot of the rural poor could be permanently improved, and in reflecting deeply on the course and exigencies of the coming campaign.

For it was obvious enough that the Imperialists would resume the offensive. The French, it was true, did not

possess Strasburg, but they held every other place in Alsace, except Brisach, and it was the firm hold which he kept on this strong *tête de pont*, as we may call it, which enabled Gallas to reinforce the troops which he had on the left bank of the upper Rhine. The French, in concert with the Swedish Government, had formed immense plans of warfare, which were to be executed in Alsace, Franche Comté, and Italy; ostensibly designed to liberate Germany from Imperial oppression, really, as always, to enlarge the boundaries of France. But they were too vast, even for the means in men and money at Richelieu's disposal; and as the Imperialists and Spaniards took the offensive, they nearly all had a negative result.

Fabert, of course, was engaged in Alsace and Franche Comté. Early in the spring he filled a great magazine at Epinal for the use of the garrisons and the field army. When that was done, while Bernhard marched from Dieuze on Saverne, La Valette crossed the Vosges by the passage of St. Dié to break up the blockade of Hagenau. The latter enterprise was speedily accomplished, and won Fabert fresh renown as a skilful conductor of convoys and a hardy leader of Light Horse. He was more conspicuously engaged in the siege of Saverne.

It may be remembered that Gallas snatched this place when he retreated so hastily from Lorraine. Seated in the deep, wooded valley of the Zorn, across one of the highways through the Vosges, Saverne as a stronghold had enjoyed for centuries a reputation which it hardly deserved. Vauban evidently preferred Phalsbourg, and when Saverne was dismantled in 1697, a really strong fort was built on that site. In 1636, when Bernhard moved up from Dieuze, he captured the castle of Phalsbourg, and invested the city on the Zorn in the month of June. Perhaps one reason why he did not speedily master the works was that they held an unusually

large garrison of regular troops; and another, it may be not the least, was that the governor was a stout soldier, one Colonel Frederick von Mulheim: He had been in the Swedish army, but had changed sides, and now, some say in the belief that he fought with a rope round his neck, he resisted stiffly one of his former comrades. Bernhard's approach had been so stealthy and rapid that he surprised an external work called the "citadel," which, although Mulheim endeavoured to retake it, does not seem to have conferred the advantages implied by its name. When Fabert, accompanying a detachment from La Valette's covering army, under the Comte de Guiche, arrived on the scene the siege had made little progress. Duke Bernhard had marched so fast that he had outstripped his heavy guns, and at first could only dispose of two light pieces. With these, however, he battered a hole in the wall, and trusted that his troops would be able to push through it. Guiche and his men stormed in and held the so-called breach for a couple of hours, but then they were forced from the post and hurled into the ditch. It was on this occasion that Fabert, who had been hit in his garments five times, stood by Guiche and dragged him safely from out the piles of dead and dying. Count Jacob von Hannau, a brilliant and promising young soldier, brought up two German regiments which he had obtained from the Duke, but he was killed at once; the attack again failed, and then Bernhard arrived himself, lost a finger, and the third storming column dissolved under the close and heavy fire. The Duke now sent Fabert to reconnoitre the place, and when he returned he spoke out with his usual frankness. The town, he reported, being divided by walls and ditches into three parts, the proper mode of attack was to seize the centre. The breach which had been assailed was too narrow, the reason being that the allied gunners, fearing the cannon of the place, had sought cover where they could

not see well into the ramparts, and consequently their fire was ineffective. He advised that the position of the batteries should be changed. His counsel prevailed; four days were occupied in firing on the central quarter, and when an assault was ordered it was found that Mulheim had moved out into the next rather than meet it. The Duke had been more than a month before the town, and La Valette grew impatient, especially as Gallas was gathering a force on the Rhine. The guns were therefore turned on the resisting section, but similar defects again showed themselves in the conduct of the artillery. Fabert saw the mistake; but as the Weimarians were jealous, in order to apply a remedy, he was obliged to diplomatize. He invited Colonel Hepburn to survey the ground, and adroitly induced the Colonel to approve a site near a mill whence two guns could play with advantage. When they wished to visit the spot, a sentinel warned them that it was under fire, but both officers persisted in running the risk, and at the end, on Hepburn's advice, Fabert's suggestion was adopted. The gallant Scotchman was shot dead the next day while he walked towards the mill, and a little later Turenne was wounded in the right arm near the same perilous ground. But the garrison were now hard pressed; one-half of the place was held by the Allies, and the end was not distant.

It was about this critical time, the second week in July, that Colonel Bourelly places an incident, told by M. de Termes, eminently illustrative of Fabert. One night he found a ladder at the foot of the wall separating one quarter from another. He set it up, ascended, entered a loft, passed the sentries unperceived, and, looking through an opening, saw by candlelight a number of persons in a room, one of whom was so respectfully treated that he inferred it must be Mulheim himself. Thinking that if he could kill him the defence would collapse, he made his way back to the ladder,

descended, climbed up again armed with a fusil, reached the opening, and levelled his piece. The powder was damp, yet he managed to fire, with what effect one knows not, and then, when the alarm was given, coolly and deftly regained the foot of the ladder in safety. It is not a dignified way of making war, but every age has its own methods, and the daring exhibited by Fabert on this occasion was nothing unusual in his varied career. On July 14th the stout Mulheim surrendered and obtained most honourable terms—he and his men marched out with all the honours of war, and they were escorted to the nearest outpost of the imperial army, now over the Rhine. But, although the French Government were bound to give Bernhard all his conquests in Alsace, they delicately insisted through Fabert, who was spokesman for La Valette, that a Lutheran could not well garrison a town which belonged to the Church—a plausible excuse, which enabled the Duke to yield with a good grace. Richelieu, with an eye already upon Strasburg, could not bear the idea of parting from Saverne.

Successful in Alsace-Lorraine, the plans of Richelieu and the Père Joseph failed elsewhere. The Prince of Condé, having with him La Meilleraye as an adviser, was sent to invade Franche Comté, nominally a neutral territory under a sort of Swiss protectorate, and coveted by the French. But while Bernhard was fighting in the Vosges and Condé besieging Dôle, the Spaniards, who worked on well-laid plans, broke into Picardy, took La Capelle and St. Quentin, descended and crossed the Somme, besieged and captured Corbie, and sent forward Jean de Werth at the head of his horsemen towards Paris itself. Had the whole army marched swiftly on the capital it might have been put to ransom if not taken, for the Spanish irruption was unforeseen, and the Count of Soissons, who had a weak force in the field, could not do anything. Fortunately the Spaniards hesitated, and Louis XIII.,

who was always great in hours of danger, threw so much energy and resolution into the work, that he had time enough to raise an army and assume the defensive. The Spaniards retreated without a battle; Guébriant secured Guise just in time to prevent them from taking it; troops were recalled from Franche Comté, and Corbie was blockaded. The stroke had been heavy, yet not heavy enough. One object the Spaniards had in view was to provoke an insurrection of the malcontent nobles, for Jean de Werth, some years afterwards, told Fabert that they hoped to give occasion for a commotion. The irresolution of Gaston and the vigour of Louis XIII. frustrated that purpose; but the invasion scared the Parisians, and ruined all the military schemes of Richelieu.

When Gallas learned that Franche Comté had been invaded, he turned from Bernhard and La Valette, crossed the Rhine at Drusenheim, recrossed by his bridge at Brisach, and marched off to succour Dôle. The Allies in the Vosges, after an interval of hesitation, moved by a flank march in the same direction. The French had not yet become adepts in field movements, and the first officers who taught them how to make war on the sound principles revived by Gustavus were Hepburn the Scot, and Rantzau, the deep-drinking Dane, who had both served in the armies of the great captain. In the meantime Condé had done his best to capture Dôle, and had failed. One scene at that siege should be ever memorable. Dôle sits on its rock basis amid green meadows on the right bank of the Doubs, surrounded by solid walls, with uplands not remote on the west, and a suburb on the opposite bank. The ramparts form a curve, and in the centre rose the great church with a tall red-brick tower, which still survives. The invaders sat down before it at the end of May; in the middle of August they were compelled to retire, not only because a powerful succour was approaching under the Duke of Lorraine, but because the defenders, chiefly the inhabitants, could not

be overcome. Their leader and animating spirit was Ferdinand de Rye, Archbishop of Besançon, an old man upwards of eighty, who had hurried to the town at the first signal of war. "On the day of the Assumption," writes the Duke of Aumale, that is the morrow of the retreat, "at the moment when the succours entered Dôle, the intrepid Archbishop caused himself to be carried up to the roof of Nôtre Dame amidst the ruin produced by the bombs. When he saw on one side the rear-guard of the retreating French, and on the other the Lorrainers, who were at hand, he thundered out the *Nunc Dimittis*. These were his last words, and he soon after died." A fine example of expiring energy, and a noble end to a life befitting so terrible a siege.

As the greater part of Condé's army marched away to Picardy, where the strain was so severe, Dijon and even Lyons were open to attack, and the former was already threatened by Charles of Lorraine. Yet he could not venture on a bold line of action, because Gallas had not at that time quitted Alsace. The Imperial General wasted many weeks at Mulhausen, and when, at the end of August, he started forward by Belfort and Vesoul, he went slowly and in a sort of state, with his vast train of artillery and impedimenta, which included a body of eight thousand women. Before he broke up from Mulhausen, Bernhard and La Valette had begun their march by Mirecourt, through the tangled passages of the Vosges, upon the plateau of Langres. The roads were in those days not what they are now, and the few thousands of allied troops occupied a month in moving from Saverne to the hills between Langres and the Saone, along the line of the Vingeanne, a stream made famous by Cæsar when he routed the armies of the Gauls. Although their march had been prolonged they were soon enough to anticipate Gallas, who on arriving at Champlitte, on the little river Sanlon, found them barring his path. His troops

were numerous and theirs few, yet he could not dislodge them. According to Fabert, the Imperial host consisted of forty-five regiments of cavalry, twenty-nine of infantry, and one hundred and four guns, which the Duke of Aumale considers gave about fifty thousand men. La Valette reports that the Allies mustered only nine thousand three hundred, whereof nearly one-half were horsemen, and says nothing of his artillery. La Valette wished to fight, but for a long time Bernhard refused his consent, and before they had come to an agreement Gallas vanished stealthily from Champlitte. Fabert had already insisted that the Imperial General intended to invade Burgundy, but the opinion for the moment was that he had retired the way he came. Before the chiefs acquired intelligence of the route he had taken, he was over the Vingeanne and his guns were battering Mirebeau, most gallantly defended by its inhabitants for several days. The Allies proceeded by roads parallel to those followed by the Imperialists, and made for the heights near Dijon at Talant and Fontaines. During the march the Croats, who swarmed on the right flank of the Imperialists, captured the baggage of La Valette, but left it parked to pursue a greater prize, Duke Bernhard himself, who was abroad riding without an escort. While they galloped on his tracks Fabert came up with some cavalry and recovered possession of the Cardinal's baggage train. Instead of making a bold push for Dijon, his proper course, Gallas turned off to the south-west, and undertook the siege of St. Jean de Losne, an ancient town on the river Saone, midway between Auxonne and Seurre.

This enterprise brought the General no honour. St. Jean de Losne stands on the right bank of the river amidst the moist and fat meadows. Its defences were feeble—a mere brick wall curved outwards and resting on the stream, with a ditch and palisaded road in front. On the left bank, connected with the town by a bridge, was a castle of no great value ;

while the sole external defences on the town front were two indifferent earthworks. The garrison consisted of one hundred and fifty regulars, Regiment Conti, and four hundred citizens ; the armament of eight guns. But the place had two advantages—a governor, Saint Point, a worthy rival of Ferdinand de Rye ; and the country round it was covered by the floods of the Saone. Gallas tried a *coup de main* and failed with loss. La Motte Houdancourt, who commanded in Seurre, deftly reinforced the defenders by sixty good men, so imperfect was the investment. The besieging guns placed in battery made a breach thirty feet wide ; the heroic governor, suffering from the *peste*, had himself carried to the breach, and remained there on his litter through the assault, which, fiercely made and sustained for three hours, was repelled by greater fortitude and equal valour. While it was in progress, a dozen men from Auxonne, notable citizens, who had descended the Saone in boats, landed and raised the spirits of the defenders to enthusiasm by rushing to the breach, brandishing their oars and boat-hooks, and bringing the welcome news that succour was at hand. The inhabitants, women and men alike, had solemnly sworn to set the town on fire and explode the powder magazines rather than yield, and they made the preparation needful for the fulfilment of the oath.

The succour announced was, indeed, not far off. On the 1st of November, Colonel Rantzau, at the head of three regiments drawn from La Valette's army, and accompanied by Fabert, who loved a daring adventure, started to relieve or rather reinforce the garrison. Marching all night they entered Auxonne the next day, and it was their advent which the boat's crew dramatically promulgated in the hardly-pressed town. The troops pushed forward during the day, and towards evening were close to the Imperial camp. But on that day a fresh storming column, led by Colonel François de Mercy, destined to win an enduring name and die in battle, strove

once more to overcome the obstinate defenders, and strove in vain. So negligent were the Imperialist camp guards that Fabert, disguised as a peasant, was able to enter its precincts and assure Rantzau that he might safely strike in. It was at the moment when the stormers had been thrust back, and Meréy in vain sought to rouse their courage, that Rantzau's trumpets were heard, all sounding together, struck on the ears of the shrinking besiegers, and through the dusk of eventide, the tumult and the confusion, the Colonel and Fabert rode into the exulting town. When the sun rose on the 3rd of November, the Imperialists were seen to be in full retreat; an imprudent sortie brought down prompt punishment, but none the less was St. Jean de Losne delivered by the valour and stout-heartedness of its governor and people, and the rapid and unhesitating march of Rantzau and Fabert. Moreover, the failure was fatal; for Gallas, not too much pressed, it is said, sprawled back to the Rhine in the month of November, his once fine army destroyed by fatigue, desertion, famine, and pestilence far more than by the sword. One writer reports that "unlucky as Gallas" became a proverb, and another that he justified afresh his reputation as "a master in the art of destroying an army." Duke Bernhard profited by the German stragglers and deserters. They took service under his colours, and more than made good his losses during the campaign.

In the meantime, as we have said, the army improvised by Louis in Paris, reinforced by troops drawn from other quarters, had compelled the Spaniards to regain the Low Countries, and by the middle of November had recovered possession of Corbie.¹ It was at this anxious time that Richelieu ran his

¹ Fontenay-Mareuil says that Corbie surrendered quickly to the King, because the Spanish and Flemish officers were anxious to reach the Low Countries in time to secure good winter quarters, without which their companies, upon which they absolutely depended, would melt away in

greatest risk; for the King's brother Gaston, the Count of Soissons, also a prince of the blood, and their more desperate adherents, who scrupled at nothing, resolved to seize if not to slay him. The King lodged in a castle near Amiens; the Cardinal abode in the town, where the councils were held. One day in October, when the council broke up, Louis, as usual, drove off to his quarters, but Richelieu remained transacting business. The propitious opportunity appeared to have come, and one of the conspirators, whom we guess to have been Montrésor, stealthily asking his chiefs whether they persisted in their design, was told that they did. When the Cardinal came down the stairs, the would-be abductors or assassins were posted in his way, so that he could not have escaped death or capture. But here Gaston's courage failed. To the disgust of Montrésor, his principal fled up-stairs in such haste that all the bravo, for he was little else, could do was to seize the fugitive prince by the collar, hasten with him side by side, and remonstrate on the loss of a golden moment. Gaston would not give the signal, stammering out that he could not do it. While this conflict of will was going on, the Count of Soissons, in order to detain him, stood calmly talking to Richelieu, at whose back waited a resolute assassin, supported by two others who were near at hand. Soissons, indeed, was ready for the stroke, but dared not act alone; and when Montrésor came back without an order from Gaston, they all saw that the grand design had broken down. Richelieu entered his carriage and drove away quietly, little thinking, to use the words of Montrésor himself, the business-like narrator of the story, that he had escaped the greatest danger he had ever run throughout his whole life. The Princes had five hundred armed gentlemen in Amiens, and none can

the winter! He also says that the King's levies, unaccustomed to hardships, suffered dreadfully from the sickness caused by the continual rain.

doubt that desperadoes like Alexander Campion, Varicarville, Montrésor, and especially St. Ibal, if it were he who was the fourth, would have stabbed or kidnapped Richelieu had Gaston of Orleans possessed nerve enough to say a single word, which Soissons would certainly have said without a moment's hesitation. Had Richelieu been murdered at Amiens on that momentous day in October, the stream of French history would have run in other channels, and Abraham Fabert would not have become a Marshal of France.

CHAPTER VII.

HIS WORK IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1637.

THE King had returned to Paris when Fabert arrived from La Valette's head-quarters to give an account of the campaign; but his stay in the capital was brief, and he was back in Lorraine by the middle of December. He was present and active at the capture of St. Avold and Créange, and in February 1637 was directed to inspect the frontier forts of Picardy, so carelessly examined the year before. It is not, however, at all certain that La Capelle and St. Quentin, whatever may have been the case with Corbie, fell an easy prey to the invaders because they were not well-provided, for the Baron de Bec, at least, was forced by his soldiers to capitulate. He was a relative of Saint Simon, who boldly took his part, but Richelieu was too strong for the "favourite," who, although obliged to forfeit his post, never lost the friendship of the King. The truth seems to be that Richelieu, or rather the War Office, had neglected the forts, and were surprised by the Spanish incursion; and that the Governors, who were all sentenced to death in their absence, for all three escaped, paid for the oversight of the great men in Paris. Richelieu gained nothing by driving Saint Simon from the Court, since Cinq Mars, the favourite who succeeded, had none of the solid qualities of Saint Simon, and proved in the end to be an unscrupulous and dangerous conspirator. Fabert, as may be supposed, did not fail to see for himself that the frontier

posts were in proper order. He thoroughly explored the arsenals and magazines; ascertained, by an exact stock-taking, that the guns and munitions were or were not there; took note of quality as well as quantity; caused the deficiencies to be made good, and, of course, directed the completion of imperfect defensive works. He held the sound opinion that a state should be always ready to make war.

Louis showed his esteem for the captain-major by giving him Rembervillers and two other small places in Lorraine, as well as by promoting him to the command of a company in the regiment of Picardy, the first on the roll of the "old" regiments. When La Valette was appointed to command an army intended to operate in Flanders, and begged the King to give him Fabert, the request was readily granted. The post he was to fill and did fill was something like that of confidential adviser, or chief of the staff, although modern terms do not apply with any precision to the loose military arrangements of those days. Thus the commander-in-chief had under him his brother, the Duke of Candale, as "lieutenant-general," a title which appears first in 1635, and the Count of Guiche, Turenne, and Rambures as *maréchaux-de-camp*, who were also practically lieutenant-generals. Fabert's position among these old comrades and superiors in rank was peculiar. He had no title and no command; but he had the right of being present at the secret council, and of "opining" with the rest, a right which, coupled with this constant and intimate intercourse with the soldier-cardinal, gave him considerable influence, which he always exerted on behalf of what he called "the service of the King." The machinery of warfare in those days had grave defects. There was no unity of command, the Generals, or most of them, were rivals; there was no confidence reposed in the chief, he and his often misnamed "subordinates" acted in daily terror of offending the King or the minister; and

in addition, the minister planted by the side of the General a commissary styled "*l'homme du roi*"; while in this campaign of 1637 the Père Joseph sent down to the camp a charlatan who had persuaded him that he was a man of science possessed of secret inventions, and who is ironically described by Fabert as "*l'homme d'esprit*," of whom we may hear more. There was no organized body of engineer workmen; no organized corps of artillery; labour was secured by impressment on the spot, and transport and provisions were obtained in the best way the intendant could devise. Even the supply of gunpowder was a monopoly, not in the hands of the State, but of a contractor, who bought the exclusive right from the Grand Master of Artillery, Richelieu's nephew, La Meilleraye. He, says Fontenay-Mareuil, "gave a 'partisan' named Sabatier the privilege of being the sole vendor of gunpowder—a thing usual in France, where the liberty is taken from the public in order to bestow an advantage upon some private person, whereof everybody suffers greatly." In 1636 Sabatier's stores ran short, and the Government was obliged to buy powder in Holland; yet the monopoly remained. The method of conducting war was hardly changed, despite the great example of Gustavus. The Generals did not seek to fight, but to avoid battles, and threw all their strength upon sieges; so that the word campaign, as applied to their proceedings, became a misnomer, since marches and combats "in the field" were the exception and not the rule. The young Turenne was still a lieutenant-general, and Enghien, destined to blaze out six years later at Rocroi, was a youthful student in the military academy of M. Benjamin at Paris, a really good school, when La Valette assembled his small army near Rhétel, with vague instructions from the minister and no fixed plan.

Fabert joined the Cardinal at Chateau Porcien, in the middle of June, before what should be done had been

decided, and warm debates arose in the council upon the line of operation. In this uncertain frame of mind the army was led through a wild and wooded region, still a forest, but also a pasture land, and better provided with roads than it was in 1637. At length opinion inclined towards the siege of Landrecies on the Sambre, an enterprise which, we infer, the Cardinal and his adviser designed from the first to undertake. At that time the Spaniards were on the frontiers of old Picardy, and held all the places, strong and weak, from Hesdin on the Canche to Charlemont on the Meuse, many castles, and La Capelle, which had been seized in the preceding year, that is, the whole of the Pas de Calais and the Nord. It was a nest of fortified towns within a few marches of Paris, and French military science had no other idea than that of taking them one by one. The moment was propitious, the Spanish army was occupied in watching the Prince of Orange about to begin the siege of Breda, and the Imperialists were afar and had their own troubles.

Moving northward and skirting the Thierache, La Valette sent Turenne to seize Hirson, and Gassion to surprise Le Cateau, both which feats were neatly done; while the main body, passing La Capelle, detached a party to reconnoitre and threaten Avesnes on the Great Helpe, and then suddenly pounced down upon Landrecies. The Governor of that place had diminished his garrison in order to throw a succour into Avesnes, and had retained no more than five hundred men. While an officer rode to Paris for the purpose of obtaining permission to carry on the siege, Fabert and Le Rasle, a famous engineer of the day, drew the lines of circumvallation, which were constructed by peasants, that is by forced labour. Just as the royal consent had been signified, La Meilleraye brought up a reinforcement, and three attacks were begun, conducted by the Duke of Candale, La Meilleraye, and Fabert. The siege presents no fact of interest, except the effective

use of twenty-four brass mortars, and the special bearing and acts of Fabert. For "*l'homme d'esprit*," the Père Joseph's pet, interfered and seriously tried his temper. The trenches were to be opened on the 9th of July, but La Valette, always afraid of the Court, felt bound to hear *l'homme d'esprit*, and so much time was lost that Fabert, who had roughly refuted his adversary, declined to break ground, alleging that the day would dawn before his labourers could get cover. The Cardinal read him a lecture on the uses of dissimulation, and uttered the sagacious remark that a little policy did no injury to soldiers. The next morning he answered the Cardinal's mild and worldly wise rebuke with polite frankness. He could not stoop to tolerate the "talker." "Deliver me from him," he said. "I have promised that Landrecies shall fall at the end of fifteen days, and if you leave me at liberty I will keep my word." La Valette was satisfied, and promised to discountenance the intruder, but when he visited the lines of circumvallation, and heard the person point out defects, he threw the blame on Fabert. Whereupon the latter became indignant, for his temper was hot, said he served as a volunteer, without a title, that he meddled in the matter because he believed his services would be useful, and withdrew to his quarters. Then La Valette, who really valued him, as well he might, soothed his ruffled pride, and the trenches of his attack were opened on the 10th of July. He pushed the work with great rapidity, in the fashion then usual, and when he had got so far forward as to batter the curtain and parapet, he resolved to pass the ditch, the depth of which he had ascertained, and bring his miners into play. The miners hesitated—enough had not been done to keep down the flanking fire and the ditch had not been filled. But Fabert infused his own dauntless spirit into the breasts of these men, and leading the way waist deep through the water in the darkness, he was followed at once by the

boldest, and then by the rest. They carried planks and beams to form cover, made good their lodgment and plied their tools; nor could they be driven off by a torrent of missiles and flaming fascines showered down when the noise of heavy blows called the defenders to arms. La Valette learned to his surprise that Fabert and the miners had passed the ditch, and in the morning he was still more astonished to see his trusted assistant stand before his tent accompanied by a soldier who, in obedience to the usage, carried a stone from the wall.

The mine was deep under the curtain, but La Valette discouraged the intrepid assailant—he wanted to secure the honours of the siege for his brother Candale. Fabert, however, observed that he could not stay his progress and also serve his King, adding, judiciously, that if the enemy did not arrive soon enough to raise the siege, La Meilleraye would probably enter the town, and put both the Cardinal and his brother to shame. The last argument touched the courtier, who was also a brave man. He crossed the ditch and inspected the work in daylight, thus giving renewed confidence to Fabert's hardy men. They drove in three mines, in shape like a trefoil, he saw them charged, and on the night of July 21 applied the match. The explosion made a breach, yet not one sufficiently large, and it was so well defended that no lodgment could be effected. Nevertheless, the Governor capitulated the next day, moved perhaps by the fact that La Meilleraye had also begun to mine; and surrendered on the 26th, as, according to the conditions, no relieving army had appeared. The honour was Fabert's, who left it to the Cardinal. He had fully redeemed his pledge, not for the first nor last time.

By an odd coincidence, a French republican army in 1794 sat down before Landrecies, which had fallen to the Austrians, and opened the trenches on the 10th of July. The Conven-

tion, true to its spirit, had adopted a decree declaring "that the four great French places, Valenciennes, Condé, Landrecies, and Le Quesnoy (captured by the Allies), should be summoned to surrender at discretion, and that in case of refusal, after a delay of twenty-four hours, the hostile garrisons should be "*passées au fil de l'épée*," that is massacred. The Generals, to their credit, defeated the truculence of the Convention by deferring the communication of the decree until after the defenders had proposed to capitulate. In the seventeenth century military usages were often barbarous, but they must yield the palm, in that respect, to the heroes of the Reign of Terror. Yet there was one striking resemblance in the methods adopted by the Bourbons and the Jacobins; for the "*homme du roi*," if not the more objectionable "*homme d'esprit*," had his counterpart in the fierce and zealous "*commissaire conventionnel*," who had more authority than his monarchical prototype, and less humanity. There was also a most distinctive difference between the two periods—the rate and nature of the communication with Paris. In 1794 the surrender of Le Quesnoy, on the 16th of August, was telegraphed that day from Lille to the capital. The message was sent by semaphore, and was the first use of that instrument for military purposes. M. Chappe, an engineer, had revived and developed an invention made in the seventeenth century by William Amonton, a mathematician. Disregarded in his day, forgotten until 1793, Engineer Chappe then lighted on it, and, favoured by the Convention, began the line of posts which in twelvemonths he carried to Lille. How much the Marshals and Generals who won campaigns for Louis XIV. were spared by his strange neglect of that important discovery!

The remainder of the campaign of 1637 illustrates very aptly the absurd and distressing conditions under which the war was carried on. The causes are on the surface. The

commanders, men of inferior capacity, were jealous of each other; the operations, if not dictated from Paris, required, as we have seen, royal, and perhaps still more ministerial sanction, and Richelieu, ever more or less in dread of being supplanted, favoured his own relatives and "creatures" whom he could trust. Thus, when he heard that the Imperialists and Spaniards had pushed an army over the Meuse, La Valette, occupying Mauberge on the Sambre, and wishing to make it a stronghold, despatched a messenger to the Court in order to obtain the needful permission. While thus engaged, La Meilleraye, always a smart intriguer, went to Paris, and returned with authority to besiege Avesnes. He was a mean-looking little man, rude and violent, who owed his position to his energy and bravery, but still more to his cousin Richelieu. His underhand manœuvre filled La Valette with alarm, because, although nominally left in command, he was directed to detach a strong force and place it at the Grand Master's disposal. Fabert advised decisive measures. He recommended the Cardinal to proceed with the fortification of Mauberge, and oblige his rival to plead for help in case of need, and the need seemed very near. The Cardinal, fearful of incurring the anger of Richelieu and the enmity of the Grand Master, declined the advice, and marched to cover the siege of Avesnes, leaving his brother and Turenne in Mauberge. But when Avesnes was reconnoitred closely, La Meilleraye found that he had undertaken more than he could perform. "It looks," he said, "like another Dôle," an exclamation which indicates his surprise and disappointment. The truth is that he did not know anything of Avesnes, and that Fabert did. He had noted that it was built on rocky ground and difficult of approach, even on the least inaccessible side; and in the end the Grand Master had to acknowledge the accuracy of Fabert's judgment. He had not forgiven that officer for the grave offence of anticipating him at Landrecies,

and so far as he dared, he had depreciated Fabert at Court. Yet when the latter complained, adroitly, without naming the Grand Master, Richelieu promptly replied that "the King was content with his services," and that "any one who thought fit to speak ill of him would lose his Majesty's confidence ;" adding, "Fear nothing, and think only of serving the State." In fact, the minister, despite the Père Joseph, had begun to see the honest and dutiful character of Fabert, and note that he stood high in the King's esteem.

In the present case the Grand Master's selfish intrigues led to consequences which might have been disastrous. Frustrated at Avesnes, he suggested the recovery of La Capelle, lost in the preceding year, and the proposal was adopted. Thereupon a part of the army was marched back to Maubeuge and the rest began the siege. It is chiefly remarkable for the fact that here, for the first time in the annals of sieges, Fabert made a remarkable and vital innovation. It was rude, elementary, and suggested by the ground, yet it was the birth of a new principle in the art of approaches, and adds a lustre to the insignificant siege of La Capelle. Observing that a large and deep ravine ran parallel to the attacks which he conducted, and also to two half fronts of the place, Fabert connected the depression with trenches in the usual way, organized it as a place of arms to shelter a battalion, and constructed a redoubt armed with cannon as a support. It is this bold device which Colonel Bourelly, a competent judge, describes as "one of the first steps in the art of attack towards the employment of parallels." During this siege Fabert's friend and comrade, Rambures, was mortally wounded. A handful of the garrison broke into the new work ; the French fell into a panic, and Rambures was hit and Bussy-Lameth killed, when they dashed forward to rally the fugitives. "Ah, *mon pauvre* Fabert," said the wounded man with pardonable pride, "I should not have

been in this state had the regiment of Rambures been on guard." He fell at the beginning of the siege, which, after twelve days of open trenches, surrendered on the 20th of September. Fabert was so terribly harrassed by "*l'homme d'esprit*," that he again lost the control of his flaming temper, and nearly broke with the Cardinal. La Valette, however, who knew the sterling excellence of his character, and who sincerely felt how much he owed to his confidential adviser, frankly enumerated and admitted them, and in an outburst of feeling, which must have captivated Fabert, declared that he regarded and would regard him as his "best friend." But, he said, so outspoken and uncompromising was the language of his "friend," "if I did not know you through and through, I should sometimes consider your advice as an affront." The Père Barre says that the Cardinal "often compared the outbursts of Fabert to saltpetre, which flames up in a moment and burns itself out, yet leaves behind neither smell nor smoke." This fervid sincerity, blazing up in a world of time-serving courtiers, must have been sadly out of place.

For his own sake, the Spanish governor of La Capelle surrendered too soon—found guilty of treachery, he was beheaded shortly afterwards by his countrymen; but he only yielded just in time to avert the raising of the siege. Even before the French troops could march in, the guns of the Imperialists were heard muttering below the horizon, and La Valette soon learned that the Cardinal-Infanta and Piccolomini had appeared before Maubeuge. Next his brother, who resigned the honour of defending the town to Turenne, rode into the camp, and for some reason, good or bad, could not rejoin his command. The French army now moved towards the Sambre, and the generals were much puzzled how to reunite a force which they had allowed to be severed. Nor was the disjunction wholly their fault. La Valette wished to abandon Maubeuge, yet dared not do so without

the King's consent; and when that assent arrived, the Imperialists had thrust themselves between the two fragments! At first it was resolved that Turenne should be directed, if directions could reach him, to cross the Sambre below Maubeuge, and by a long *détour* through Chinay, endeavour to save his troops. Fabert steadfastly opposed this plan with his wonted ardour, and suggested another which he supported with more than his usual persuasiveness. He took the bold course of proposing that Turenne should retreat up the river by the right bank, and that both he and La Valette should, from front and rear, fall upon the enemy posted near Pont sur Sambre. The council of war naturally exclaimed that such a scheme violated a well-known "rule"; Fabert answered that it did not apply to the facts, since the armies were already separated, and the best way to unite them would be by a battle. He asked for a rapid march and resolute onset; and he may have added that his plan was contrary to the ordinary practice, that the enemy would not divine it, and that if he did, no time should be allowed him to devise counter measures. Then it was asked, how Turenne could be so surely informed as to avert a disaster? Fabert replied by producing an ingenious device. He framed and wrote down a commonplace message, copies of which were to be entrusted to three tried scouts. He then made them learn the key by heart, so that if any one were captured the writing would be valueless and the interpretation safe. Yet even this method of rescuing Turenne by a convergent march could not be attempted until the consent of the King had been obtained. It was brought by Chavigny himself, a Secretary of State and a friend of Fabert. Meantime Gassion, resolved to join Turenne, had started out with a small escort of horse. He was attacked, and his men dispersed or slain, but the intrepid warrior swam the Sambre, and joined his young comrade in arms alone.

Fabert's plan succeeded beautifully, though not without some peril. Turenne received his message, notified the fact by firing three guns, and forthwith started on his way. La Valette also marched from Favril in the night; at dawn he attacked, but could not carry the enemy's position, near Vaux, and defended by a little stream. At the same time Turenne had come up to and passed the Great Helpe; Fabert, discovering a ford, enabled La Valette to turn the enemy's position; and the two severed fragments of an army now joined, drove the Imperialists over the Sambre, and compelled them to retire upon Mons. That exploit in mid October was practically the close of the campaign. The army lingered in the field because Richelieu had ordered La Valette to surprise Cambrai, which one Vercourt, who looks remarkably like "*l'homme d'esprit*," had made the Père Joseph believe could be taken by means of petards. The embarrassments of La Valette were so great, his fears so lively, and the methods so absurd, that in the end he despatched Fabert to Paris, on a mission which led to some dramatic scenes at Rueil and St. Germain, and brought out Fabert's character in a startling and somewhat questionable light.

It was an age of intrigue, and often of very base intrigue. Cardinal de la Valette, timid and apprehensive, saw in the presence of Vercourt and the action of the Grand Master a design to bring him to shame and deprive him of command. He thought that if he endeavoured to take Cambrai by means of the charlatan's "infallible secret," he would become a laughing-stock to the army, and that if he refused to do so, Richelieu would punish him. Fabert was indignant with the impostor, tremblingly alive to the honour of his general, and ready to brave the Cardinal-Duke. The fear of consequences to himself never deterred him. He saw, or thought he saw, that the only chance of saving his chief lay in a direct appeal to the King; and La Valette, who knew

his courage and disinterestedness, readily fell in with his plans. So he started for Paris towards the end of October, bearing a letter of compliments to Richelieu, whom it was absolutely necessary to see before he dared visit King Louis. He therefore hastened to Rueil. This country seat stood between the Seine and Mont Valerien, on the western slopes of the hills. Evelyn, who saw it in 1641, says it was a small house, "but fairly built in the form of a castle, moated round," in the midst of magnificent gardens, which enchanted the travelling lover of artificial scenery, and even of "vineyards, cornfields, meadows, groves, and walks of vast length." Nor were fountains wanting in what the Surrey squire calls a "paradise."¹ Richelieu lived and worked in this moated castle, defended by a company of his guards, who had watched over his safety ever since Gaston, Duke of Orleans, rode up to Rueil one morning, at the head of armed men, threatened much, but, as his wont was, did not strike. Fabert found the minister in bed, attended by Des Noyers, the "*petit bonhomme*," as Louis used playfully to call him. The little man discreetly withdrew from the bedside, but did not leave the room, and the interview began. Having read the letter, Richelieu opened the attack. "You have come from a campaign," he said, "which would have been glorious for France"—really always his first thought—"had the advice of the Grand Master been followed." Fabert, dealing tenderly with La Meilleraye, defended his General at some length. Richelieu listened, ordered him to call forthwith on the King, adding, "You will do well another time to refrain from talking to me about things which do not concern you." Fabert, saying that he had answered because he had been questioned, took leave; but turning back to fire another shot, he heard Richelieu direct Des Noyers to hurry to St.

¹ It all vanished long ago, this charming pleasance; but there is still a "château" and park near Rueil.

Germain, and listen to what Fabert would say. The latter hastened off, reached St. Germain first, and found Louis in his study. The King, as Richelieu put it, esteemed and welcomed Fabert, who, his Majesty leaning on the table and listening intently, began to unfold his story. Soon Des Noyers was announced, and entering stood aloof, but Fabert begged that he might come near, and correct him if he erred. "Approach," said the King; "listen to Fabert, he has put things otherwise than they have been represented to me." The frank soldier then repeated his complaints from the beginning. He did not mention La Meilleraye, but he plainly indicated the nature of his conduct, especially in regard to Avesnes, and showed how, among the Grand Master's party, "some from policy, others through ignorance, and all from jealousy," decried and obstructed the commander. There was a good deal of truth in this, but La Valette might have risked less had he adopted Fabert's fearless advice to avoid finesse, and act in a bold downright fashion. Having done with the "cabal," he fell upon Vercourt, the "great genius," describing him as a corsair, robber, and murderer, who had fled over the border from justice, and had served as a guide to the Spaniards when they invaded Picardy in 1636. "I find the proofs of what I have asserted," he said, "in the letters of full pardon lately obtained from your Majesty by these who protect him"—the Père Joseph, to wit. He then described and refuted the puerile projects of Vercourt—how he tried to dry up a ditch with pumps which would not have emptied a well; how he proposed—this was his grand scheme—to blow down a bastion by means of his petards inserted in the work; and how, when asked by what process he would contrive to pass the ditch and affix his explosives, he answered that the first could be done with ladders, and the second under cover of shot-proof cuirasses. Fabert, apologizing for having to speak of such puerilities, broke out

with good sense and vigour. "Is it not an insult to your Majesty's army," he exclaimed, "that it should be compelled to suffer from cold and continual rains, in order that it might serve as the escort of a madman in the presence of enemies who have witnessed a spectacle so dishonouring for France?" Well may King Louis's countenance have assumed that dark and reflective look which is so often described as "*sombre et rêveur*." At such conjunctures he spoke little, but to the purpose. "I cannot allow that my troops should be exposed to an affront before Cambrai, nor that an enterprise which I do not approve should be pushed any further," he said to Des Noyers; and to Fabert, "Go to the Cardinal-Minister, and give him an exact account of what you know." Thus the first battle was won.

When Fabert saw Richelieu the next morning the minister, fully informed of what had passed at St. Germain, threw into his refined face that expression of restrained severity which he assumed to overawe his opponents. Fabert, respectful but dauntless, looked straight into the keen eyes of the Cardinal as he insisted on the soundness of Vercourt's project, and gave no sign of yielding to the King. Yet he did not impress his auditor with an opinion that he would not, in the end, obey his master. On leaving the room he encountered the Père Joseph, and the fiery Capucin at once exhaled his wrath and betrayed his disappointment. He soundly rated Fabert because he had ridiculed "M. de Vercourt," a man of rare merit, who "alone possessed those secrets which had enabled the Spaniards to capture strong places in the late campaigns." "After all the trouble I have taken," he went on, "to secure him for France, you and your clique only seek to obstruct him, and disgust him with the service. It is your jealousy and presumption which have frustrated his fine designs. Only those who neither love the State, nor the glory of the Prince, nor their own

honour, would hinder, as you have done and do, his enterprise at Cambrai." Evidently the monk thoroughly believed in Vercourt and in himself, as a man of war; and when Fabert, undismayed, enlarged, perhaps with some vehemence, on the folly of the undertaking, Joseph grew more angry. "The King," he exclaimed, "has no need of philosophers in his armies; he wants soldiers, stirring, active and resolute men—*les dissertateurs* are only useful in the schools. You are rebels," he shouted, "who must be punished, beginning with the Duke of Candale, who ought to be shut up in the Bastille." So they parted, these two hot-tempered men, and Fabert drew from the interview and from his indignation an inference which led him to engage in a bold and barely excusable action. He inferred that La Valette and his brother were in imminent danger of disgrace, and he resolved, there and then, to thwart the stroke by dealing a counter-blow at Richelieu himself. He was carried away by his love for and gratitude to the Epernon family, a respectable feeling, yet not one warranting civil war.

Louis XIII. was a prince subject to variable moods but devoted to constant purposes. He wished with passionate fervour to reign as an absolute monarch, to diminish the power of Austria and Spain, and to increase the strength and the territory of France. It was because Richelieu was possessed by the same haughty policy, and was endowed with a genius at once imaginative, audacious, and practical, and therefore fitted to enforce the policy common to both, that Louis selected and held fast to the Cardinal with a steadfastness nothing could shake. But this superb and imperious minister, sometimes moved by a devouring zeal for what he considered the service of the State, sometimes by that love of exercising power which is natural to strong characters, as well as weak ones, not unfrequently applied a severe strain to the bond uniting the sovereign

to his servant. This gave rise to what Richelieu called "*fâcheries*," and others the changeful humour of the King, and in moments of irritation the monarch was apt to blurt out language bitter and hostile to the domineering statesman. It was on his irritable moods that the enemies of Richelieu relied, although certainly after the Day of Dupes they had repeated experience that Louis never allowed his temper to pervert his judgment, and had seen that a little reflection, however much he may have strayed, brought him back to the Cardinal's side. It was not slavish dependence, it was a keen and clear perception that no other man then living was capable of executing the policy which both pursued. The partnership of authority and genius was remarkable, if not unique, for it was absolutely independent of even mere liking, and rested solely on what may be called a pure business foundation. The power which the King had to bestow the minister had the faculty to use, but the King was quite as much art and part in the work as the minister, who, so long as he was faithful to the cause which bound them together, remained what he was in reality, the *Vice-roi*. Those who aspired to dissolve the formidable compact always relied on the King's temper, and made the grave mistake of forgetting the tenacity of his judgment in the last resort.

That Fabert should have erred in this way is excusable, for he was not a courtier, and was misled by his excessive and undying gratitude to the house of Epemon. Some years earlier, perhaps when Richelieu, wishing the Marquis of Rambures to marry Madame de Combalet, was enraged by the refusal of the proud noble, it appears that King Louis said something to Rambures which pointed to a plan for ousting the Cardinal, a plan to be concerted with Fabert. The latter now remembered it, and in a private interview with Louis brought it to his remembrance. He

said that he had found the means of striking down the proud minister who persisted in giving orders contrary to those of his Majesty—in the Vercourt-Cambrai project, for example. The King must have listened with more than his usual thoughtfulness, when he heard what were the means. Cardinal de la Valette, said the daring soldier, a faithful man, commands a good army; with these we can pull down the minister and overawe his partizans. Very doubtful means, his Majesty must have thought, considering the timidity of La Valette. And when Fabert went on to arraign the minister, Louis, whatever he may have thought of his prudence, could not fail to admire his courage and honesty. “Your minister,” he said, “is accused of sacrificing the peace of the realm to his ambition; of continuing the war for the purpose of making himself necessary, and of perpetuating his authority,”—allegations not likely to make any impression on Louis. “The people cry aloud against his abuse of your power and your finances. He employs your name to crush those who resist, and your treasures to augment his creatures. Your subjects, who receive from your Majesty brevets as a recompense for their services, behold with indignation that your favours remain without effect if the minister does not confirm them. There is no benefice in the Church, or government in the realm, no employment however trifling in the army, the law, or the Court, which he does not take from your faithful subjects and give to his creatures.” Very extravagant assertions, yet not without some warrant; but as an indictment having this defect, that his Majesty had largely delegated his powers, as he well knew, in order to secure an agent who could achieve his great designs.

Not displeased with his faithful subject, Louis temporized according to his fashion, and pointed out that, even if he were sure that La Valette had the makings of a minister, he

would not be able to make himself obeyed; but he was positive enough in his language when he forbade Fabert and his superiors to obey the orders of Richelieu should they be opposed to those of the King; and he put a decisive veto on the Vercourt-Cambrai project, so dear to the Père Joseph. On taking leave Fabert tried to obtain a less inexplicit answer to his revolutionary suggestion, but warmly pressing his hand, Louis said, "Depart, I have nothing more to say." The potentate at Rueil, who, luckily for Fabert, knew nothing of these secret colloquies, would not defer at once to the King's command. That was a satisfaction to the Père Joseph. In the presence of Fabert, who had to be checked, Noyers was requested to read aloud a formal order directing the generals to carry out Vercourt's fantastic scheme; yet the sharp captain went from Rueil in the firm belief that a counter-order would immediately follow. His prevision was justified; the day after he reached the camp it duly came; the army forthwith went into winter quarters, and Fabert was ordered to relieve the acting-governor of Metz, M. de Roquepine.

Richelieu's conduct on this occasion seems to admit of an easy explanation. He knew nothing of the merits or demerits of Vercourt, but he wished to preserve his authority in the army, as was natural and, indeed, essential; he also desired to please his faithful comrade, the monk, who helped him so well in the wide field of politics; but he would not run counter to the King when he was, as he could be, resolute; and he certainly would not have sanctioned any project likely to disgrace and weaken the arms of France. Hence, glad to be thwarted in time to avert one, he bore no grudge against the public action either of La Valette or Fabert. But had he known the secret proposal of the latter to the King, he would have put forth all his power to crush both.

Fabert was not justified in taking the course he did take. It was bad in every way. If it had succeeded it would have furnished another evil precedent; and if it had failed, the most likely result, the minister would have become more powerful than ever, and the King's position would have been intolerable. That it never had a chance of being adopted does not relieve Fabert from blame; but his honest motives, at least, excuse conduct too much in harmony with the practices of princes and nobles who contrived assassination plots and rebelled to attain their own selfish ends. Although the impetuous soldier erred gravely, his intentions and disinterestedness raised him far above their level.

The operations of the year, we may briefly note, had not on the whole been unfavourable to the French. If La Valette had done little compared with what the pair of sanguine ecclesiastics in Paris expected from him, and if Rohan, through their neglect, had been obliged to abandon the Valtelline and the Grisons, the Count of Harcourt, whom we shall soon meet again, had driven the Spaniards from the islands off the coast of Provence, the Duke of Halluin, son of Marshal Schomberg, and himself soon a Marshal, had brilliantly relieved Lencate on the coast of Lower Languedoc, and Duke Bernhard had waged successful petty warfare in Franche Comté and Upper Alsace. In Paris, Richelieu had obtained a great victory over the Spanish party in the Court by getting hold of clear proof that Queen Anne still worked in concert with the Spaniards and her old ally, Madame de Chevreuse, and by thwarting the dangerous influence which the Jesuits brought to bear on the King through the innocent agency of the pious and beautiful Mademoiselle de la Fayette. "A young girl and an old monk," says M. Henri Martin, in a characteristic sentence, "dared to attack the colossus who made Europe tremble." But they failed, for on

reflection the King always supported the minister who unfalteringly pursued the realization of the policy to which both were devoted. So that 1637 must rank, on the whole, among the years which gave to Richelieu his greatest triumphs.

CHAPTER VIII.

FAMINE IN THE MESSIN.

THE great sufferer by war in the seventeenth and in all preceding centuries was the peasant, the cultivator who dwelt outside the walled cities, and most of all the peasant whose lot was cast in the borderland. A broad belt of country from the North Sea to the Jura was incessantly furrowed, not only by armies, but by troops of plunderers issuing from the innumerable castles, which held two or three score of armed men, who sallied out at intervals and collected provisions, more like brigands than soldiers. The armies were under some sort of control, but the bands out on a foray under none. Neither respected the peasant or farmer. They seized his horses, drove off his cattle, took his carts, carried away his grain and his hay, levied contributions when they did not steal, and frequently applied the torch to consume what they could not bear with them. The word "raid" had not been invented, but the thing existed in perfection. It was called a "course," and the *courreurs*, if their track was not marked out by ashes, left behind them desolate homes, empty barns, and vacant pastures. So great was the devastation on the broad unsettled frontier fringe that the armies so-called were always hard pressed for food and transport, and the wonder is how, with such a wickedly

wasteful system of warfare as the rule, any military operations whatever could be conducted. The interior of France, after the civil strife had ceased, though subjected to others, was free from this species of calamity; but Franche Comté, Burgundy, Lorraine, Champagne, Artois, Flanders, and Picardy were repeatedly harried from end to end. The consequences were constant pestilence and recurring famine.

Two years of such nefarious usage had produced direful results in Lorraine and the Messin. They had been tormented not only by the King's armies, but by the levies of their Duke, men of many nations, and the foreign regiments drawn from Germany and Switzerland, the reiters and pikemen commanded by Bernhard being the greatest adepts in robbery and arson, and the least under control. But it would be wrong to fasten all the mischief on them, since the French were nearly as accomplished as their allies. Fabert returned to his native city in December 1637, to act as the King's lieutenant, and strictly he was bound to do no more than safeguard the fortress. But when he saw famine and pestilence devouring the Messin, he stepped at once beyond the narrow circle of his duties. At all times his heart was moved by the cry of distress rising up from the oppressed rural folk, and he never ceased to labour on their behalf. But the spectacle presented by the Messin, once so prosperous, would have appalled and roused a less tender-hearted man. To a great extent cultivation was at an end; the peasants wandered by hundreds in the woods, and tried to appease their hunger with roots and berries and leaves. It is even related that they tore up the dead from their graves, and fell upon the corpses of men slain in combat. The Père Barre, quoting a manuscript containing the reports made to Fabert by his surgeon, La Rivière, gives revolting details of an example of cannibalism, telling how a widow thus tried to nourish her famishing children.

The Messin was an irregular patch of territory on both banks of the Moselle, and it is still a rich and fertile district as it was before the cruel warfare of the seventeenth century had made it a desert. Fabert could look into its condition for himself, and he did, knowing well every inch of ground. Then he lost no time in pondering, but swiftly applied his wonderful faculty as an organizer to afford relief. He obtained an account, as far as he could, of the quantity of cereals stored up or hoarded in the towns, bourgs, and villages, and issued at once an order forbidding the sale or gift of "grains" without a permit bearing his signature. Then he had lists of persons made out, and so arranged his plans that every one could be supplied with a pound of bread per diem; those who could pay were charged at a fixed low rate, those who could not obtained their ration gratis on the presentation of a paper signed by himself. He never spared his own labours, especially in such a cause, and we can easily imagine that his wife gave freely her ready aid. Having improvised this extensive poor law and put it in effective operation, to meet the dreadful pressing exigency, he next endeavoured to avert a future famine. He rode over the whole country a second time, and everywhere gave out that all who would resume their farm labours should be effectually helped; and so great was the trust reposed in his word, so thoroughly did the cultivators feel that he would redeem his pledges, that they rapidly gathered in their farms and villages to resume work. He supplied seed on easy terms, asking only that his advances should be replaced by brimming measures at the next harvest, and thus he satisfied present necessities, brought back the population, and provided for the future. Always he had an eye to solid results, and was never content with makeshifts.

It was at this time that thoughts long brooding in his mind took shape. He saw two great evils—one the seizure of

the household goods, the cattle and the harness, the ploughs and implements essential to cultivation as satisfaction for the non-payment of taxes, which he thought was, if not unjust, yet certainly short-sighted policy; and the other was that the ever-grasping seigneurs had taken possession of the common lands and woods pertaining to the bourgs and villages, lands kept in grass and essential to the system of peasant cultivation. These usurped lands in the Messin he compelled, or rather began to compel, the seigneurs to surrender; and by dint of judicious effort in Paris he contrived, six years later, to obtain a royal order exempting cattle and implements of the cultivator from seizure, even for non-payment of the grinding *taille*, or personal tax. Six years after Fabert had been laid in his grave, Colbert, who was a youth in 1638, re-established the communal properties throughout the kingdom by a royal edict, and thus the renowned statesman completed the initial work of Fabert. His active and far-seeing mind showed its provident quality still further in attempts to restore commerce, once prosperous in Metz; and it is interesting to note that he began by endeavouring to collect exact statistics; but this project, like many others, was interrupted by a summons which called him once more to the toils of war. Nowhere is his great and enterprising mind seen to more advantage than when he is grappling with economic or industrial difficulties; and his success in those fields throughout his career is due to the fact that, in working out peaceful as well as warlike problems, he applied sound business principles to their solution. The limitations of his powers as a statesman, and indeed as a captain, we cannot know, for he was never subjected to the extreme tests of extended scope and great responsibility; but this we do know, that whatever he did in the field or the closet, as a manufacturer, as an organizer, as an administrator, he always did well, and it is reasonable, therefore, to believe

that with larger opportunities, wider fields, and more authority, he would also have shone out brightly among the foremost men of his age, as something more than a great, dutiful, and honourable public servant employed within comparatively limited spheres of action.

CHAPTER IX.

CAMPAIGNING IN ITALY.

THE useful labours of Fabert in the Messin were cut short in March 1638 by a summons from Paris. Besides fighting famine and oppression, he had stored up supplies in Metz, repaired roads and collected boats, for the siege of Thionville, which he hoped La Valette would be authorized to undertake ; but it fell out otherwise. The French in Piedmont had built a fort at Bremo, on the left bank of the Po, just below the confluence of the Sesia. It was a sort of outpost upon what was then Spanish ground, and served as a support to Casale. The Governor of Milan beset it early in the year, and Créqui, the French commander, hurried thither with a handful of men to relieve the place. He went out to reconnoitre the enemy's position, and leaning against a tree trunk, drew forth and used his spying-glass. While he was thus engaged, his bright red raiment attracted the sharp eyes of a gunner, who aimed his piece so accurately, or so luckily, that the shot struck full on the Marshal and slew him outright. The news of his death and the prompt surrender of Bremo soon reached Paris ; Montgalliard,¹ who yielded too soon, was beheaded for treachery, and La Valette was directed to take the command beyond the Alps. It was the fortunate cannon-shot of the Spanish gunner which led

¹ He had a garrison six hundred strong, and drew pay for seventeen hundred !

Fabert once more to Italy, for La Valette demanded his aid, and the King promised to give him the rank of *Sergent de bataille*, a promise not fulfilled by the minister until nearly the end of the campaign. Still it was a valid promise, and intended to be kept, for the King permitted his faithful soldier to sell his commissions of Captain and Major, and he did so, though not until, with characteristic fidelity, he had obtained the consent of the Duke of Epemon, whose friendly aid he never forgot, whose position as Colonel-General of the Infantry, curtailed in power, yet never revoked, he persisted in dutifully recognizing. The family he served does not command admiration either for conduct or talents, but that does not make less striking the unfailing gratitude and the moral courage displayed by Fabert, for the Epemon family was always under a cloud.

The soldier-Cardinal accepted his post with reluctance and apprehension. He lived in constant dread. The motive of his attachment to Richelieu was terror. The old grand seigneur, his father, and the Duke of La Valette, his brother, he well knew were suspected of disaffection, not altogether without reason, and the Cardinal believed firmly that his own subservience to the minister was the last safeguard of his family. His anxiety of mind was sharpened by the advices he received from the Court; Chavigny, for example, bidding him take care how he wrote, and what he said about the Père Joseph, who figures in the letters under the significant names of *Patelin* and *Nero*. Naturally the Cardinal did not conceal his distress from Fabert, who was a frank though not a courtly confidant. "I count entirely on you in this war," said the Cardinal; "consider well what should be done." "The best thing for you," was the brusque rejoinder, "will be to get out of the business as soon as you can." Then, with great perspicacity, he sketched out what would happen. "You will be deluded if you hope for any success," he said.

“They will leave you without money, troops, and munitions. The Duchess of Savoy (she was Regent) wants experience and her council knowledge; the people hate, and the great folks detest the French. What can you do against a Spanish army far stronger than your own? You should have held fast to your resolve to besiege Thionville,”—that is, clung to the command in Lorraine. “But the Court,” said the blunt little man, “does with you what it likes, and your complaisance will not fail to destroy you in the end.” All La Valette could answer was that his family were in peril—apt, for example, to intrigue with the Count of Soissons and Gaston, whom we have seen “willing to wound, but yet afraid to strike,” at Amiens, in 1636. If he could not appease what he called the vindictiveness of Richelieu, still, La Valette said, he could prove to his father and brother that he had done everything in his power to conjure away the menacing danger. And so throughout the campaign he laboured under this dread of calamity, instead of acting, if indeed he could have acted, with foresight, vigour, and resolution.

The state of affairs in Piedmont would have tried a stronger man than the Cardinal. Christine, the Regent, a sister of Louis XIII., like her late husband, Victor, was an ally of the French, not from choice but compulsion. She leaned, like her mother, Marie de Médicis, towards the Spanish side. Her brothers-in-law, Prince Thomas and Cardinal Maurice, were in the Spanish camp, and put forward a claim to be the guardians of their brother’s children. The claim was doubtless genuine, but it served as a pretext, over and above that solid reason supplied by the presence of the French, for the invasion of Piedmont. The difficulty was rendered more complex by the fact that Richelieu, having a hold on the eastern slope, did not wish to make more conquests on that side of the Alps, and therefore kept on foot there no larger body of troops than might be sufficient to occupy the

Spaniards and prevent them from using Piedmont against him. Where he did wish to prevail and annex territory was on the line between Switzerland and the North Sea, and five out of seven armies in the field were in that quarter, the sixth being on the Bidassoa and the seventh in Piedmont. The real work of aggrandizement was to be done on the side next Germany and the Low Countries, for there lay the valuable prey; the incursion into Spain and the war maintained in Italy were in the nature of diversions, which, if successful, might have profitable results, and if negative still kept hostile troops employed. It was not a wise way of making war and it was very costly, but as yet they knew no better.

The military abilities and the experience of Fabert were wasted in the Italian campaign of 1638. The army was weak in numbers; at head-quarters nothing was known of the strength, positions, and even probable intentions of the enemy. The country, as Fabert truly said, detested the French; and to crown all, La Valette sought, or felt himself bound to exercise, command through and under the shelter of that feeblest of all military instruments, a council of war, and that council composed of men jealous of each other, and ever seeking to curry favour with the minister. There was, of course, "*un homme du roi*," or commissary, who corresponded directly with Richelieu, having such influence as flowed from that. Fabert was admitted to the council, but not having his patent as *sergent de bataille*, he could exert no authority except such as was derived from strong arguments and sound views; and it need hardly to be said that La Valette bowed to the council, and that the council neutralized Fabert. Fighting talent existed in abundance, but brain power to direct it was scarce; and thus his real soldiership was expended in vain.

The Governor of Milan, Llegancz, a man of some capacity,

suddenly swooped down upon Vercelli, a fortress seated on the Sesia, in a land of streams, canals, and marshes, productive of rice crops then as it is now, and regarded by the experts of that day as the gate of Piedmont. The Spaniard crossed the river, and drew his main lines of entrenchment on the western side, relying on the Sesia mainly as a defence towards the east, whence ran his line of communication with Milan. The task before the little Franco-Piedmontese army was to raise the siege, but the council of war could never be got to sanction any promising scheme, and it had none of its own. Fabert, who knew the country, had a plan which, whether it succeeded or not, was workmanlike. The Hotspurs, as usual, burned to storm the entrenchments, and break in by dint of "sheer strength and stupidity." Fabert proposed the bold step of marching the whole army to the left, or Milanese bank of the Sesia, and throwing it bodily into the fortress, and he did so because he knew the east front was weak and easily mastered.

After much delay and talk he actually succeeded in obtaining an assent to his plan, up to a certain point; but when the army attained the position, the council of war would not strike the blow. He proved by actual experiment that two thousand men could be sent in, for they were; he showed that a battery of twelve guns thoroughly commanded the line of ingress, for the cannon were posted and brought into action. It was all in vain—the council of war would neither fight nor manœuvre to any purpose; La Valette feared to command lest he should offend the minister's courtiers, who were always thinking more of their own advancement and the discomfiture of rivals than the effective performance of their duties. Fabert, who was animated by the single-minded purpose of doing the best for the State, who had reconnoitred the hostile lines, had sounded the depth of the water-ways, was frustrated by men who had neither his ability nor his

knowledge, painfully and perilously acquired. The result was that the ill-used army plodded back across the many rivers by Desana to Prarolo on the right bank of the Sesia opposite Palestro; that after an investment of six weeks the place surrendered to the Spaniard, not without some suspicion of collusion between Lleganez and the Piedmontese governor; and that two thousand good soldiers besides the garrison, not to speak of credit, were sacrificed to ineptitude and indecision.

As usual in such cases, Fabert, always welcome to the King, was despatched into France to "explain" the defeat and solicit men and money. Richelieu gave him promises which were tardily and partially redeemed in the autumn, when more indecisive marches, sieges, and skirmishes ensued. During the summer the old *échevin* and printer of Metz died, but his valiant son did not hear of the death until he had rejoined the army, and was not able to visit his family until mid-winter. He found that a perplexed succession had already been partially settled in his absence, but any disputes which arose on that score are happily unrecorded. Before a final arrangement could be made Richelieu summoned him to the field, furnished him with a formal appointment as *sergent de bataille*, and sent him to aid La Valette in Piedmont, whither he went in the spring of 1639. The Cardinal-Duke, who had lost the Père Joseph, his great friend and Fabert's enemy, had found that the King trusted, and that he could trust, the frank and loyal soldier; so, with more promises of all kinds, he hurried him over the Alps, where French interests and French arms were in peril from Piedmontese discontent and Spanish enterprise.

No one could profit even by a sketch of the warfare practised at this date in Piedmont, and we refrain, except in so far as it brings out the characteristics of Fabert. It was, apparently, a struggle for strong places in order to insure

subsistence. Almost all the combats arose out of attempts to gain or to relieve a fortified town.

Each side, however, had one object in common—the French desired to retain, their opponents to wrest from them, Casale and Turin. The earliest labour imposed upon Fabert was that of putting the capital in a state of defence, a task rendered more arduous by the disaffection of the inhabitants. He so far succeeded as to thwart the first tentative attacks, and was even able to take part in the field warfare by striking a decisive blow against the Spaniards who endeavoured to relieve Chivasso, and might have prevailed had not the vigilant *sergent de bataille* seized and defended, by fine offensive as well as defensive operations, a hill neglected by the staff. While La Valette, bent on running after fortified towns, divided his army, Prince Thomas of Savoy, favoured by darkness and the citizens, mastered the town of Turin. It was done so suddenly that the Regent Christine, hastily donning a dressing-gown, only had time to enter the citadel, held by a French garrison. The blow brought back the wandering army, which, by hard fighting, having cut a road into the citadel, sent off the Regent and her little son to Susa, and prepared to strike for existence. Fabert came with them. A council of war, contrary to precedent, resolved upon a sortie in force by night. The leading columns driving in the enemy's outposts, pushed forward eagerly into the town; but when they set the houses on fire the lurid light revealed their numbers and position, and a furious cannonade threw them into a disorderly flight. In this crisis Fabert, gathering up what troops he could collect, headed a fresh onset, carried several barricades one after the other, and only retired when ordered by the Cardinal. Struck down by a musket-shot in the middle of the fray, he had concealed his wound and fought on. It was only when the retreat had been effected that he fainted from pain long endured and from loss of blood.

Even La Valette, to whom he had reported, did not know until then that he was wounded. It was not the first time that he had displayed such fortitude, and the officer who exclaimed, "That man, let people say what they like, will become a Marshal of France," understood the secret of his career.

The wound was severe—two musket-shots in one thigh; and before it healed, the intervention of a Cardinal had secured a truce for two months. At one period of his cure, after the wound had closed, inflammation set in with such violence that the surgeons wished to amputate the limb. It was then that Fabert's hardihood broke forth in quaint speech. Refusing to submit to the operation, he said, "*Qui aura le gigot, aura le reste du corps : je serai à moi-même mon Chirurgien.*" He redeemed his promise, reduced the inflammation by applying "cream," says the Père Barre, and saved his leg. Cold water would have done as well, could he have had faith in it; but water or cream, the sturdy resolution exhibited is the same.

By the time his health was restored, Louis XIII. and Richelieu had entered Grenoble, September 21st, and thither Fabert was summoned. While he rode over the Alpine passes, Christine joined her brother. The two long-separated and curiously contrasted children of Henry IV. met outside the town. They rushed into each other's arms with much show of affection, and before entering Grenoble walked apart for some brief space in a meadow, one claiming, the other promising aid and comfort. But political interests tyrannized over family relationship; Christine would not concede what the King and his minister demanded—her strongest fortresses and the charge of her son; and Richelieu has allowed us to read in his own bitter words how deeply he resented a refusal which thwarted his cherished plans. Fabert arrived during the high debate, which was prolonged for many days, and

ended in the departure of Christine up the Isère for Montmeillan, the coveted stronghold which she would not "lend." It was a time of trial for the proud minister—he had lost his tried friend and comrade, the Père Joseph ; Duke Bernhard, victorious at Brisach, had died in his prime, died in his bed, not in siege or battle ; now came news of the mortal sickness, and soon of the death of La Valette, who had few talents, but was faithful to the Cardinal-Duke. That tragic incident—he could not survive his own misfortunes in Piedmont, for which, says Richelieu, he was not responsible, nor the merited disgrace of his brother, the Duke—gave a new and unexpected turn to the fortunes of Fabert. He had hurried to Rivoli, where he found his late chief dead ; and when he hastened back, Richelieu, who had tested his qualities, sent for him, and proffered his protection in exchange for hearty service. Astonished at the offer, Fabert frankly accepted it, naïvely indicating his surprise by saying that he had thought, not for the first time it will be remembered, of migrating to the Empire. Richelieu gave him his hand, saying that his friendship was needful to him, and that curious bargain was struck which really decided the fortunes of Fabert.

He was taken into partnership with these high persons, and the consequences were soon apparent. The Count of Guiche, whose life he saved at Saverne, called the next day on Fabert to congratulate him on his nomination to the governorship of La Capelle, famous little fortress on the northern frontier. He was surprised to see his friend unmoved, and still more when Fabert said that the post was due to M. de Roquepine, who had served so well at Metz, and that he should say so to his Eminence. He kept his word by adroitly thanking Richelieu for selecting so brave and trusty an officer. A proceeding so generous and unusual struck a minister who did not find disinterestedness a common virtue ; and he answered, " Tell M. de Roquepine that you present

him with the Governorship of La Capelle." How well Richelieu knew his man is shown by the fact that the rare action did not arouse his suspicions, and by his obtaining for Fabert a company in the Guards, which had to be purchased from an old officer for a large sum supplied by the King and the Cardinal. When the captain tendered his thanks, the minister frankly admitted that he knew no one who could serve him so well with the King as Fabert, none who could explain the Cardinal's projects in a manner which made them so acceptable. "He esteems you, and believes in you," said the great man, "rating your candour and fidelity higher than that of any one." That was why the outspoken soldier, who detested what he called the *manège de cour*, and never entered into intrigues, was wanted to minimize the friction between a King who had a will, and his haughty and able chief servant. The compact, honourable to Fabert, affords a striking example of Richelieu's sagacity in penetrating the character of a blunt and accomplished soldier, who, although no courtier, perhaps for that reason was prized for his manly as well as his intellectual qualities by Louis XIII.

Fabert went back to Italy, not only as a high staff officer—as *maréchal*, a grade above that of *sergent de bataille*—but as *homme du roi*, a post which gave him a still firmer position. At his former visit to Rivoli he had paid the servants of La Valette, and, in part, the cost of transporting his remains to Cadillac in Guyenne, sums which, we assume, together with a loan to his son, were ultimately refunded by the octogenarian duke, at this time under surveillance in Saintonge. Fabert's unselfishness in pecuniary matters was notorious. As he said nothing of his loans to La Valette, or of the payments made on his behalf, thoughtful friends were eager to see justice done. "I fear," wrote the Governor of Savigliano to Chavigny, "that he will lose his seven or eight thousand crowns, unless his friends take more care of his

interests than he does himself." Happily the friends took the needful steps, and he lost nothing.

The Count of Harcourt's instructions were based on memoranda prepared by Fabert, and the object of the autumn campaign, apparently, was the re-victualling of Casale on the Po, which was a thorn in the side of the Spaniards. Now, the French troops were at Carignano; Prince Thomas in Turin, and Lleganez in the Milan country. In order to provision Casale, it was necessary to cover the cross roads through the hills of Montserrat from the attacks of Thomas, and move so speedily as to outstrip and anticipate the Spaniards. Chieri, not far from Turin, a town on the San Pietro, an affluent of the Po, was selected as a place whence Prince Thomas could be effectively controlled. Thither the army moved in October, and having reduced it by a few gunshots, they encamped in this land of brooks and streams. Thence went the trains bearing stores for Casale, which they reached in safety, the plan of their march being laid down by Fabert and a Piedmontese captain. The operation, of course, took time, nearly a month; the provisions in the camp at Chieri were exhausted, and as no properly-guarded line of regular transport service existed, Harcourt was obliged to depart in search of food and forage from his garrisons beyond the upper reaches of the Po. By this time the Spaniards, who were drawing nigh by the roads from the south, had been able to communicate with Turin, and devise a simultaneous attack from opposite sides on the French army. When Harcourt put his troops in motion westwards, he does not seem to have been aware of the proximity of the Spaniards, at least he was incredulous when Fabert insisted that the day would not pass without a combat. "Our enemies," said he, "know how to make war." Late in the afternoon Prince Thomas, marching on the road by Moncalieri, struck the French advance, and Lleganez, moving up

from Poirino, fell on the rear-guard. The French were speedily formed; Turenne and Fabert in the van, drawing up the infantry in a hollow way between the Santena rivulet and a homestead, and allowed the Piedmontese to approach closely, and then the troops, delivering a volley point-blank, charged home. Their successful onset was followed up by the cavalry, Fabert and Turenne, always close friends, dashing forward in pursuit. La Motte Houdancourt also withstood the Spaniards, who retired when they saw that the attack from the Turin side had so signally failed. It was a fortunate little action, very well fought, is known as the combat of La Rota, and figures largely in French books. The road being opened, Harcourt the next day, rapidly crossing the Po, halting first at Carignano and then at Vigone, regained his communications with Pignerol and France. He had been known before in the army as *Cadet la perle*, because he wore a large pearl as an earring; but now the soldiers called him the *Perle des cadets*. In the campaign histories, the names of Turenne, Plessis Praslin, and La Motte Houdancourt are read, but not that of Fabert, who as a soldier was at least the equal of all, except the young Turenne. What *he* thought of such niggling warfare may be imagined by the light of his great exploits in after years.

CHAPTER X.

FABERT WORKS WITH THE KING AND RICHELIEU.

WINTER had come when Harcourt, who was to achieve still greater feats, placed his troops in quarters. An order from Richelieu then summoned the *maréchal de bataille* to Paris, and no fine speeches of *la Perle des cadets*, or friendly remonstrances from Turenne, availed to prevent prompt obedience. Thenceforth he saw service in Italy no more. He crossed the Alps for the last time, and, as a soldier, became one of the directing agents in the closet of the King and the cabinet of the minister. One result of deep consultations concerning the operations of 1640 grew out of a suggestion made by Fabert. Arras, a Spanish possession, not only in fact but feeling, barred the way to the acquisition of Artois, and was, besides, a "standing menace" to Picardy. Hesdin, captured in the preceding summer by La Meilleraye, who received his Marshal's *bâton* on the breach from the King's hand, made the first effective lodgment beyond the Somme; and Fabert now proposed that a second and more important should be achieved by the reduction of Arras. Richelieu approved; the King readily yielded when Fabert expounded his plans, and the secret was well kept by the trio. The next step was to obtain exact information respecting the condition of the fortress; and when the Cardinal asked him to name a daring man who would undertake the hazardous task, offering a very large reward, Fabert replied,

"I am your man, and I will do the job for nothing." He could not be dissuaded by any arguments based on danger; disguised as a peasant, he threaded the hostile lines; bearing a basket of vegetables for sale, he entered the fortress, saw as much as he could, and safely returned to Paris. Such enterprises on the part of officers were not unusual in those days—a Baron de Limières was caught disguised as a Cordelier; a Marquis de Sainte Croix, got up as a sailor, escaped; a Spanish don of high rank was long a prisoner—and Fabert's absolute fearlessness fitted him for such exploits. No wonder the King and Richelieu held in high esteem a soldier who spoke out when needful, and risked hanging in their service.

The operations were designed in concert with the Prince of Orange in accordance with the methods then in vogue. The French armies assembled in April, made several marches in May intended to deceive the enemy, and then at the right moment moved on Arras, which they invested in the middle of June with a combined force of over thirty thousand men. They had time to draw their lines of circumvallation before the Spaniards were ready to march, but when the news arrived that the Cardinal-Infanta was afoot, discord broke out among the besiegers. Knowing that the main question would be one of supplies, Fabert, who was with the King at Amiens, volunteered to ride into the lines in order to concert measures. He got safely through only to find the three Marshals divided in opinion. La Meilleraye wished to march out and fight the Spaniards, Châtillon would not consent without an order from the King. Fabert thereupon rode back to Doullens, whither Richelieu had come, the bearer of these unwelcome tidings. He advised the minister to insist on the siege as the main object. Richelieu then wrote, and Fabert galloped back to the camp bearing a letter addressed to the disputants. "I am not a soldier, nor

competent to advise you," said the minister. "Truly I have read much, and have never found that, after taking eighteen days to throw up lines, they were abandoned to fight an enemy. When the King gave you the command of his armies he believed you were capable, and he does not care whether you march out or not, but you will answer with your heads if you do not take Arras." By this time the enemy had come up, spread his horsemen abroad, occupied posts where convoys could be intercepted, and seemed disposed to starve out the besiegers. Fabert got through them with his emphatic note, which he supplemented by informing the Marshals that two immense trains with ample escorts were on the road. Once more, indeed many times, he traversed the country beset by hostile patrols. It was thus mainly his daring and incessant activity which enabled the camps to be fed, for the convoys arrived; his tireless energy and skill imparted the needful concert and steadiness to the operations; and when, after repulse of the army of succour, the brave governor, an O'Neil, surrendered (August 9th) on honourable terms, the King, hearing the news, said pointing to Fabert, "Without this brave man I should not be master of Arras." But he was not a noble, or a marshal, only an able, accomplished, and indefatigable staff-officer of a kind not common in those days. The detailed record of his labours lies buried in piles of unread correspondence, and history barely knows his name.

It is worth noting that the Duke of Enghien, soon to command an army and win a thundering victory at Rocroi, saw his first service at this siege, nor less so that, profiting by his studies in the military school, he was as active with his pen and pencil as with his sword, jotting down notes, drawing plans, educating his soldierly eye and mind, taking his trade seriously at that early age, and sending the result of his toils to his father. Another personage of a different

stamp was seen by the sharp eyes of that Arnauld who became an Abbé, and was then a trooper in the famous Carabins, once commanded by his stout uncle Pierre. The King gave the command of the volunteers to Cinq Mars, under whom the Duke of Beaufort and the Duke of Mercœur, descendants of Henry IV. and Gabrielle, at once refused to serve. Commenting on the appearance of Cinq Mars, Arnauld says, "I don't know whether it was because he had been unwell, but although he was handsome and had a gracious presence, elsewhere, and was extremely *paré* that day, yet he did not appear at the head of his squadron with that proud bearing which so becomes a soldier." Monglat, who was present, notes the contrast between the volunteers who came in from Paris and those who rode from the camp to meet the big convoy. The new-comers were dandies, shining in gold and silver, topped with fine feathers, and dressed as if for a ball. The young men who had gone through the campaign were sunburnt, clad in thick, clumsy, dirty buff coats. The dandies had just spread out their table-cloths for breakfast when the trumpet suddenly called them to battle! It is a contrast not unfrequently repeated even now in war-time.

The autumn and winter brought Fabert rest from labours in the field, but not in the cabinet, where his practical knowledge and inventiveness were so welcome. Thus he was busily engaged in a department which does so much and shows so little—organization, transport, and supply, working continuously with Richelieu at Rueil and Louis at St. Germain. At the beginning of 1641 he was employed to escort the famous Jean de Werth, captured in battle by Bernhard at Rhinfeld, to Nancy; negotiations having been set on foot to exchange the intrepid but somewhat headlong leader of horse for Horn, the Swede, who was a general. Returning from that duty he was directed to see that La

Meilleraie was properly supplied with what was needful for the siege of Aire, a troublesome walled town on the Lys, and do the staff-work with the convoy. But a grave peril had come to a head in another quarter, and Fabert was called up to help, if he could.

Richelieu had been for some time aware that his old enemies, the Duke of Bouillon, Turenne's elder brother, now a Catholic, and the Count of Soissons, the grandson of the Condé who was murdered in cold blood on the field of Jarnac, were engaged in a conspiracy to effect his overthrow. Nor were they alone. They were joined by Henry, Duke of Guise, a flighty personage who is chiefly known for his escapade in Naples, and they successfully sought and obtained the promise of aid from the Spaniards. Sedan, where Soissons had resided since 1637, the year after he was present at Amiens, when Gaston's cowardice prevented the assassination of the hated Cardinal, was the head-quarters of the plot and, so to speak, the base of operations. It was widespread, all the old hands being engaged, including the ill-used Charles, Duke of Lorraine and Madame de Chevreuse; but the pivot of the scheme was its Bourbon leader, who besides his other griefs, never forgot that Richelieu wished him to marry Madame de Combalet. These conspirators had got together some soldiery in Sedan; it was suspected that they looked for a body of Imperialists; and Marshal Châtillon, an able but "lethargic" officer, was sent to watch and thwart the enterprise. He was instructed to capture Bouillon, which, it was supposed, would bar the road to the troops coming from Belgium, and then storm Sedan. He did nothing, and it was his inactivity which made the impatient Richelieu send his trusted assistant to spur on the Marshal. Fabert, however, soon hurried back to the King at Abbeville with weighty information. The cautious commander on the Meuse had reasons for delay, and his judgment was confirmed

by receiving, after Fabert's departure, fresh orders from the Court, directing him to post his troops in such a way as would cover Champagne, and there await reinforcements. In fact, the minister had learned not only that a strong Spanish division was on the road, but that the conspiracy of exalted malcontents was wider and deeper than he had believed.

The sharpness of the crisis, in the eyes of Louis and the Cardinal, is indicated by the fact that the King announced his intention of bringing up a strong army, and by the despatch of Fabert once more to the scene. Meanwhile Châtillon, quitting the meadows of Douzy, had crossed the Meuse and pitched his camp at Remilly, where Fabert found him on the 1st of July. Lamboy, with his Imperialists, now appeared marching down the right bank of the Chiers towards Sedan, and his junction with Bouillon and Soissons could not be prevented. Fabert then adroitly induced the Marshal to issue orders for the march of the army to the heights above Frénois, so well-known since the war of 1870, whence they could act with advantage against an enemy who might cross the Meuse. A storm of rain was enough to delay the execution of the order, and while Châtillon, despite the ardour of his advisers, remained at Remilly, the conspirators, July 6th, passed the river above Sedan, and marched on the position, reconnoitred by Fabert. Late that morning the Royal army marched forth, moving on Bulson, and then through the hills north-west towards the Bar. Fabert, as usual in front of the column, discovered that the enemy was near the wood of Marfée, still extant between Cheveuges and Noyers. Riding swiftly up to the Marshal, he told him what he had seen. "It is only a party which has come out to reconnoitre us," said Châtillon. Fabert, often brusque, answered bluntly, "Parbleu, no one reconnoitres with infantry; I have seen the pikes; I have seen the whole army!" As Châtillon gave no heed to news of such import, the

irritated captain turned to a noble youth, and asked him "whether he had ever seen an army defeated." The answer was "No." "Well," rejoined Fabert, "to-day you will see one."¹ The impetuous sally roused Châtillon, who rode forward to see for himself, and immediately formed his troops for action.

Then followed a foolish, scrambling battle of one hour's duration, ending in the rout of the Royal army. Whether from sympathy with Soissons or discontent, the greater part of the troops would not fight. They broke and fled, when they did not surrender. At the time when the battle was really lost, an officer had gathered up two hundred gendarmes, troopers as valiant as himself, and riding headlong into the hostile left wing, broke down everything before them, and what was more, killed the Count of Soissons in the hurly-burly. That modest officer, telling the story, does not mention himself, but in the report of Châtillon we read his name—Fabert, who throughout the brief conflict, "according to his habitual courage, never spared himself." He covered the flight and helped to rally the scattered army. He says in one letter that the French, panic-stricken, defeated themselves; and in another, still indignant, he wrote, "The example of the general, the excellent array, the astonishment of the enemy, the bad position they occupied, and all the advantages which it is possible to have in a combat, only turned to our shame." The conspirators won the chance victory, but the death of Soissons put an end to their enterprise. The King and Richelieu came to Rheims; the Imperialists marched back to Flanders; and Bouillon, submitting rather proudly, made his peace with Louis. It was half-hearted, and only a prelude to the tragedy of the succeeding year.

Before the troubles on the Meuse were evaded rather than

¹ This is the earliest report of an anecdote told of many commanders.

settled on a firm basis, messengers arrived at Mézières with reports showing that La Meilleraye had been outwitted by the Cardinal-Infanta, who, reinforced by Lamboy, had early in August manœuvred the Frenchman out of his position near Aire before he had destroyed the siege works. The consequence was that the enemy invested the place, making good La Meilleraye's old lines, and defying attack. A reinforcement under De Brézé enabled the two marshals to capture Lens and La Bassée, threaten Lille, and commit the havoc usual in those days. But the Imperialist would not relinquish his grip of the fort on the Lys, feeling sure that famine would compel the French garrison to beat *chamade*. Fabert was sent to look into and report upon this unwelcome reverse. Moving actively hither and thither, he carried to the Court at Amiens the fruit of his observations. Aire could not be succoured, but Bapaume might be snatched from the enemy. The King objected, on fair grounds, that the capture could not be effected before the adversary would be in a position to break up the siege; but the fervid soldier undertook to carry the town in eight days. Thereupon the King yielded; Fabert hastened to the camp with full powers, and by his energy the garrison was compelled to capitulate in seven days. "Excellent man," said the King, "he promises more than one hopes, and performs more than he promises." It was at this siege that he drew on himself the remonstrances of his brother guardsmen. They held that he compromised their regiment and his dignity by acting as engineer. His answer was that he owed his honours to his zeal in the King's service, and that those who liked to grow gray in the Guards, which he did not mean to do, might act as they pleased, but for his part he should work hard at the business in hand, which was to take the place, without regard to their view of the dignity of his position. So he toiled in the trenches, batteries, and galleries, according to his custom, and won Bapaume—

a sharp and deserved reproof from this new kind of soldier to a noblesse so quick to look down on the working engineers who were not noble.

Further services kept him some time on the frontiers of Artois with his friend, the newly promoted Marshal Guiche, and on his return to the Court he met with an adventure characteristic of the times which nearly cost him his life. During his journey to Compiègne, obliged to wait for horses, he went to bed, while the officer who accompanied him lay down in his clothes. Early in the morning Count Rantzau and Captain de Quesnai, seeing a light, rushed into his room. The uproar they made woke Fabert, who said, "Gentlemen, this is my room; there are others in the hotel, and I beg you will seek one." "Sir," was the brutal answer, "sleep if you can, I intend to make merry." Fabert, enraged, leapt out of bed, while Rantzau, laughing, cried, "The affair is serious, the gentleman is taking to his hosen." He took to his sword, in his shirt as he was, and fell on the intruders, who, getting on each side of Fabert, wounded him in fourteen places before the hotel people could run in. They seized the trooper, and Fabert, charging, overbore Rantzau. Holding his sword at the brawler's throat, he asked his name, "Beg your life or I will take it." "His name, M. de Fabert," said mine host, "is Rantzau." The young man was horror-struck at his own conduct. Fabert, hot-tempered and fierce, was ever generous, and he allowed the "young scamps," as he called them, to escape while the host sought the police. Then turning to his own attendant officer, who had slunk aside during the fight, he said, "Fly with them; your shameful cowardice is as dishonouring as their crime, and merits the same punishment." Two wounds were severe, and kept him long in his chamber, tended by the King's surgeon, who was sent to the inn as soon as Fabert's servant reported the incident at Compiègne. The delinquents were arrested, and

prosecuted by the angry King, but the reiterated prayers of their victim at length secured their pardon.

Fortunately he recovered soon enough to show his faithfulness to the old Duke of Epemon. Finding that, on the strength of forged letters, the Duke was accused of conspiring to kill the King and the Cardinal, Fabert not only laboured to convict the miscreants, but promptly declared that he would answer with his head for the Duke's innocence, and proposed that he should be imprisoned in the Bastille until his pledge was made good. His offer, of course, was not accepted, but the evidence he produced showing the wickedness of the accuser, led to the arrest and ultimately the execution of that confirmed felon. Neither the King nor the Cardinal regarded the vehemence of Fabert's interposition with disfavour; both knew that nothing daunted him when his heart and head were engaged to serve a friend. Epemon's request, in January 1642, that Fabert should be allowed to visit him, was therefore readily accorded. The haughty old Duke had been confined in the gloomy castle of Loches, where he kept up his state, but was a virtual prisoner, humbled, yet still treated with formal respect by Richelieu. He was now eighty-eight, and had long outlived his age. He had seen the grand seigneurs of his brilliant youth destroyed or rendered powerless by the terrible minister; and had himself suffered bitter mortifications with a stern unbending fortitude. He would never address the Cardinal as "Monseigneur," or, in his letters, place over his signature any words except "very humble and very affectionate," not *obedient*, "servant." He was not disloyal, had been ever a firm enemy of the League, and he represented the last wreck of provincial liberty as understood by the great governors. Shrewd, and full of bitter experiences, he said to the arch-conspirator Fontrailles, "Beware of the Bastille;" and implored De Thou to quit

the Court for the Bench, not believing that they and Cinq Mars could overthrow a man like Richelieu. Altogether a unique figure, with a touch of the heroic in his persistent bearing. Fabert, who received from him his first employment, stood by his death-bed in the grim chateau, and received his last message to the King, which was a request that his Majesty would protect the family of his faithful subject. "Sir," said his mournful listener, "have you forgotten his Eminence? One word to him will not injure your children." But the only response he could get, after a pause, was, "I pray God to bless his enterprises, I am his servant." Fabert departed; and soon afterwards the inflexible veteran passed quietly away.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRAGEDY OF CINQ MARS.

A REVOLT in Catalonia and Roussillon, favoured and openly supported by the French Court, offered so good an opportunity for the extension of the frontier to the Pyrenees, that the principal military effort, in 1642, was made on that side. Guébriant, in January, won his *bâton* at Kempen, near Cologne, where he cleverly overwhelmed one division of the Imperialists before it could be joined by another, thus safeguarding the Rhine. Harcourt, fresh from new Italian triumphs, and Guiche were on the Belgian border, and six months afterwards, having divided their forces, the latter suffered a severe defeat at Honnecourt, which was the counterpart of Kempen, in an opposite sense, and due to similar causes. But during the first half of the year the conditions were suitable for the prosecution of the war of conquest in Roussillon, and in February the King and Richelieu set out to join the army already on the spot. They moved slowly, with an immense train, both sickly, yet upborne by their high temper and constancy of spirit. The capital of Roussillon, Perpignan, a redoubtable fortress seated on the Têt, in a fertile plain, and commanding all the eastern passes through the Pyrenees, was really the object of the campaign; but Louis carried with him all the regal apparatus, crown, sceptre, robes, needful for a state

entry into Barcelona when he should take formal possession of Catalonia, an ambitious design never to be accomplished.

Fabert, preceding the double processional column of King and minister, joined the army under La Meilleraye while it was yet in camp. He appears to have been the bearer of a royal order, based on his own advice, directing the Marshal to reduce the sea fortress of Collioure before tackling Perpignan. Though not relished by the commander it was certainly the correct operation, because the port at that time gave the Spaniards easy access to the plain; and they had demonstrated its value by landing a force there in January and pouring a fresh stock of provisions into the magazines of Perpignan. A little north of Collioure the rocky spurs of the hills terminate, and a low, sandy beach, backed by a chain of lakes and salt marshes, separated by rare and narrow intervals, fringes the curve of the gulf as far as the Rhone, broken only by low headlands at Leucate, Agde, and Cette. There is no safe anchoring ground off this line of coast, which is edged by moving sandbanks. In the middle of the seventeenth century the inlet defended by Collioure, now superseded by Port Vendres, further south, had an especial value because it was unique, and thus Fabert's advice was sound. La Meilleraye, rude and violent in manner and speech, while he took care not to thwart the Cardinal, to whom he owed everything, turned his anger upon the trusted staff officer of whose influence at Court he was jealous. Discoursing at table on the qualities of his troops, he said, in a loud voice, "We have Fabert's *chanoines*," or, as we might say, carpet knights or feather-bed soldiers, meaning the first battalion of the Guard, long on duty at Court. The insult rankled; and when, the next day, the guardsman saluted the Marshal as he rode up, and the ill-bred gentleman shouted "This is not a time for idle ceremony, but for action," Fabert's sensitive temper flamed up at the stupid imputation of cowardice, and

he was only restrained by his calm friend Turenne from fighting the offender there and then.

The army moved down on Collioure, and it was in the presence of the enemy that La Meilleraye, who had had time for reflection, handsomely made a rough sort of reparation which ended the quarrel. He asked the opinion of his subordinate, who replied that he was there to obey orders. "Let us forget the past," said the Marshal; "what do you advise?" "To attack," was the brief answer. "March," rejoined the Marshal. The rapid assault and capture of an outwork speedily followed; the army invested the fort, and the two brave men never quarrelled again. The Spaniards lost heavily in the combat, and obtaining a truce to bury the dead, Fabert volunteered as a hostage from the French side. While in the citadel his quick eyes, ever on the watch, caught sight of the tower which contained the large cistern whence the garrison derived their supply of water. When operations were renewed on his return to the besiegers' quarters, he drove a mine under that tower, blew it up, and thus compelled a surrender on April 10th, 1642. The conditions were now secured which rendered the siege of Perpignan safe, for the French army in Catalonia barred the road to succour through the mountains. Fabert went off to scout about the place; he judged that, being too strong, it could only be reduced by famine, and that report he carried to the King.

When Collioure surrendered, Louis had been a month at Narbonne, an ancient Roman station, built on the marshlands at the head of a lake, and unhealthy. Richelieu, feeble and afflicted, brought to death's door by fever and abscesses, one of which for some time deprived him of the use of his right hand, kept beside his master, doubtful of what might befall; for differences had arisen between them, and the slightest opposition from his King sent a shudder of anxiety through

the Cardinal. He knew that a web of intrigue had been woven about him by the old conspirators reinforced by the youthful Cinq Mars, and his anguish of mind increased when the King, towards the end of April, set out for the camp before Perpignan, whither the minister's infirmities prevented him from going. He had ever been nervous, distrustful, shaken by apprehensions, and now his terror was the greater, because he suspected even the constancy of Louis, on which, nevertheless, he had such good reason to rely. The army, or rather some of its officers, even those in the Guard, had been tampered with, and all the chiefs were not free from suspicion. The Cardinal, who ostentatiously made his will, remained in Narbonne, enduring its vitiated air, until the end of May, when, under a fresh access of alarm, he sought the sea-breezes at Agde, where the Herault pours through a fruitful plain bordered by extinct volcanoes and lava beds; and then, beset by more fears, hurried to Arles, afterwards to Tarascon, as if making for Paris. He had invoked and received the aid of the Prince of Orange, who was deeply interested in the frustration of the Cinq Mars faction, and he had taken the precaution to secure the willing help of Condé and his son Enghien. We may leave him journeying towards Tarascon, better in body somewhat, yet deeply alarmed, or seeming so, and follow the movements of the King and Fabert, which will give some insight into the causes of Richelieu's trembling perturbation, if all the time he was not, in some degree at least, acting a part to deceive his hosts of enemies. For in Paris his friends were not afraid. Even Marie de Gonzaga wrote to Cinq Mars that his projects were as well known there as the fact that the Seine flowed under the Pont Neuf; while old Condé scouted the notion that Louis would abandon the Cardinal; and the shrewd Chancellor, Séguier, openly said that there would be another Day of Dupes more astounding than the first.

The army blockaded Perpignan, which rendered its fall certain; and as we have no further interest in the operation, it may at once be said that the fine old fortress surrendered in September, and Roussillon became definitively French. The King arrived in the camp about the 24th of April, and remained until the beginning of June. Those were critical months in his reign, for Gaston, the Duke of Bouillon, Cinq Mars, and probably De Thou, had formed a gigantic plot to destroy the Cardinal, impose their will on the King, if he lived, and secure the Regency if he died. The young favourite had played his last card in the game of ambition. The Gascon Fontrailles, Count of Astarac, a man of boundless daring and not less wariness, a born conspirator, had, on behalf of his principals, negotiated a treaty with Spain which secured her help in money and troops for the furthering of her and their schemes. It was a continuation of the Soissons plot on a broader basis, and belonged to a series which the Franco-Spanish party had carried on ever since the murder of Henry IV. An act of war on the part of Spain, it was an act of treason on the part of the French faction. Cinq Mars, son of Marshal Effiat, promoted to the recognized post of favourite, and made *Grand Écuyer*, took it into his foolish young head to try a fall with the Cardinal. He drew in the Duke of Bouillon, drew in Gaston, both ready to be drawn in, met the first in secret at St. Germain, and both in the Hôtel de Venise, Rue Dauphine, as it afterwards became, employed, with his full consent, Augustin de Thou as a go-between, and obtained the perilous commission for Fontrailles. Madame de Chevreuse, and probably Queen Anne of Austria, were no strangers to the plot, though they may not have known its full scope; and Anne's participation, if she participated, must have been tempered by anxiety for her eldest son.

At the time when the King went to the Perpignan leaguer,

Fontrailles had returned from Spain with his black treaty, and Cinq Mars was daily engaged in winning over adherents to his cause. He had gained, or said he had gained, some officers of the Guards, and one day, encountering Fabert, took him apart, ostensibly to play quoits, really to talk treason. What he said must be inferred from Fabert's prompt and indignant reply to the insult, and his abrupt departure. How much was revealed cannot be known; but enough to make Fabert, who saw De Thou near by, lead him aside and implore him to break off from the Favourite and seek an asylum in Italy. De Thou, an old comrade, much esteemed, promised to cross the Alps, but did not, because a malady developed itself in his throat. The counsel shows that his friend measured correctly the dangers of the moment. Another incident proves that Louis himself was alive to the discord around him. One day he said to Fabert, "I know that my army is divided into two factions—Royalists and Cardinalists, to which do you belong?" The answer was direct and frank—"The Cardinalists, Sire," adding the notable words, that he was convinced of his fidelity and zeal for the King's service. "It is true," said the King, "that the Cardinal has rendered me important services, and it would not be just that mere trifles should make me forget them." It was ever so. However great the irritation excited by the Cardinal's grand manner, overbearing even when studiously deferential, the King, who was silent and reflective, mastered his wrath. The most dangerous enemy of Richelieu was the beautiful, ingenious, and pious Mademoiselle la Fayette, but she took the veil. She also was an unconscious tool in the hands of the Spanish faction. Louis gave up Madame de Hautefort—all his attachments were platonic—when she used her influence against the Cardinal. "Your Majesty," said Brienne, "often promised that she should not be disgraced." Louis

answered that he had, on condition "*qu'elle seroit sage*;" adding, "Moreover, she was to keep clear of cabals, and that is exactly what I could never induce her to do."

Cinq Mars not only had a bias towards cabals, but was encouraged by the Queen. Louis endured him long with great patience, to such a degree that the courtiers thought the Favourite was supreme. The wiser knew better. Brienne, trying to persuade the ill-starred De Thou not to join the army in Roussillon, said that the King had an aversion for Cinq Mars, and could no longer endure him. The fact revealed itself in a convincing manner before the walls of Perpignan, months after Brienne's warning to his friend. Fabert one morning submitted a military report to the King, who, as his custom was, proceeded to draw plans of the works, Fabert giving explanatory comments. Cinq Mars, who was present, ridiculed the veteran soldier's remarks, and that folly drew on him a torrent of fierce rebuke from the King. "You," said he to the impertinent youngster, "have no doubt passed the night in the trenches, since you speak so knowingly." "Sire," rejoined Cinq Mars, "you know to the contrary." "Go," stammered out Louis, smiting the arms of his chair with fury, "go, you are insufferable. You wish people to believe that you pass your nights in ordering with me great affairs of State, when you pass them in my *garde-robe* with my valets reading *Ariosto*—go, *orgueilleux, il y a six mois que je vous vomis*" ["I spewed you out, proud fool, six months ago"]. The young man went, saying to Fabert as he departed, "Sir, I thank you." "What did he say?" cried the King, "he seemed to utter a menace." "No, Sire," was the reply; "no one dares to employ threats in the presence of your Majesty, and elsewhere they are not endured." A dramatic scene which, while it proves how correct was Brienne's information in the preceding February, also

tends to render inexplicable the terrors and suspicions of Richelieu.¹

At this very moment, when the credit of Cinq Mars was wholly gone, the minister, worn down with racking pains, was in an agony of mental torture. He had ever been a victim to his fears, his physical timidity contrasting strongly with his moral daring. "I have often heard my father relate," says St. Simon, "how the Cardinal awoke him many times in the dead of the night, drawing aside the bed curtains, and flinging himself down beside the wise favourite, crying aloud that he was lost." He dreaded the worst in every grave conjuncture, yet took infinite pains to make himself secure. During the Roussillon period he summoned the Duke of Enghien, bade him remain by his side, and quietly collect a body of his friends to act as a safeguard, which that shrewd young man did. Yet, as we have seen, there was no solid ground for terror, except from the audacity of men like Fontrailles and the reckless spirits in the army. Even Enghien saw that "M. le Grand was going from bad to worse," and Chavigny, who was sent to the royal headquarters, returned without having spoken to Louis about his titular favourite, because he found the pair *mal ensemble*. The letter which the King sent to Richelieu on the 3rd of June by Chavigny, after hearing the startling news of the defeat at Honnecourt, which was taken soberly, should have completely satisfied the suspiciously apprehensive Cardinal. "I finish," wrote the King, "in assuring you, that whatever false reports may be current, I love you more than ever, and that we have been too long together to be ever separated, a fact which I wish all the world should know." It is fair to

¹ As Fabert returned to Narbonne, April 24, after escorting the King to the camp, it is possible that he made to Richelieu some report of the roadside interview with Cinq Mars, and thereby increased the Cardinal's chronic anxieties and alarms.

infer that the engaging modesty, frankness, and sturdy loyalty of Fabert, which formed a striking contrast to the self-seeking, flippancy, and arrogance of Cinq Mars, helped to destroy such influence as the unfortunate favourite may possibly have possessed at some early time over the King's mind.

Suddenly the whole edifice of treason tumbled down with a crash. The King, quitting the Perpignan camp, reached Narbonne on the 11th of June. Chavigny, travelling from Arles, arrived the next day, and handed to Louis a packet from the Cardinal. It contained a copy of the treaty negotiated by Fontrailles at Madrid, or the substance of that document, and revealed at once the perfidy of Cinq Mars, Gaston, Bouillon, and by implication De Thou, who certainly was engaged, more or less, in the plot throughout. The papers submitted to him showed Louis that his brother was to be placed in possession of Sedan, supported by Spanish troops and money, and by their aid was to force from France a peace favourable to Spain and the Empire—reverse, in fact, at a blow the policy of the King and Richelieu. Louis could not have hesitated, as he is said to have done, in deciding on his course. Orders for the arrest of Cinq Mars were out on the 12th, and he was caught, hiding in a cottage, on the 13th of June. De Thou was also captured, and in due time Bouillon, then in command of the French forces in Italy, was made prisoner at Casale, lurking in a hayloft, whither he had fled at the first scent of danger. Fontrailles, a shifty and dexterous man, betook himself to England before the fatal discovery. Gaston, Duke of Orleans, behaved, as usual, meanly; he secured a bare pardon and nothing more by denouncing his confederates; and having burned the original, produced a copy of the treaty. Cinq Mars and De Thou were beheaded; Bouillon suffered only the loss of Sedan. Yet Gaston and he were the principal delinquents, for without them the other conspirators were powerless! Whence

Richelieu obtained the papers in the packet carried by Chavigny to Narbonne is still a subject of conjecture. Suspicion fell on Queen Anne; on Gaston, on his almoner, the paltry Abbé de la Rivière; on a secret agent of Richelieu's at Madrid, even on Olivarez himself! No proofs or certain indications have come to light. The secret seems to have been known to Fabert, but if so, he kept his lips closed, and it died with him, or went to ashes when he burned his papers.

When the conspiracy was discovered Fabert was directed to bring up from the camp at Perpignan several companies of the Guard. He joined the King at Montfrin, where he got fresh orders which sent him to Lyons. Before starting, he paid a hurried visit to Tarascon, purporting to visit De Thou, a prisoner in the castle there. He never deserted his friends in misfortune, and dared, under the eyes of Richelieu, to give such a proof of his deep concern. Not admitted, he went his way, not, however, without writing a letter to the prisoner's brother, the Abbé de Bonneval, although he could only report that De Thou was well in health, and express his grief at the disgrace of a tried friend for whom he was ready to do all in his power. It was while the King halted at Montfrin, sick almost unto death, that he had himself borne to the bedside of Richelieu at Tarascon. Neither could sit upright, and the famous interview, begun, it is said, with tears on both sides, showed how profoundly these two fellow-workers were touched. What passed is nowhere recorded; yet the writers who systematically blacken Louis, in order to exalt the power and greatness of his minister, set forth in sparkling epigrams the magnanimity of the Cardinal and the trembling subserviency of the King. So that even the conspicuous proof which he gave of his confidence, when, departing, he conferred on Richelieu full powers, including the command of the army in Roussillon, is distorted into evidence of Louis's contrition for

having dallied with the idea of "dethroning" the real sovereign! The truth is, that a character like that of the King lacked the showy qualities which appeal to the imaginations of men who see in the Cardinal-Duke a personification of France, menacing, aggressive, terrible, and who forget that without a just, sagacious, and constant Louis XIII. to bear with and sustain him, there could have been no proud and splendid Richelieu, no towering man of genius to work his life out in realizing a French patriot's ideal.

Louis journeyed forward on his way to Fontainebleau, and Fabert travelled with him as far as La Bresle. Here, in the evening, the King spoke to him very freely on the recent conduct of Cinq Mars, which rankled deeply in his mind, and showed that the favourite had long been suspected by a reticent master, who could not refrain from pouring his woes into the ear of a trusted officer. The next morning his Majesty departed, after ordering Fabert to capture Trevoux, a walled town on the Rhone belonging to the Grande Mademoiselle, and held on her behalf by the troops of Gaston, her father, who, it was feared, might slip into the place for shelter. When the task had been dexterously performed, Fabert was sent once more to Roussillon with a reinforcement, baseless rumours having been floated implying that the Spaniards were about to attempt the relief of Perpignan. There he remained until the capitulation was signed. The Cardinal, learning at the same time that the axe had slain De Thou and Cinq Mars, wrote his exulting despatch—"Sire, your troops are in Perpignan and your enemies are dead." He was still helpless, moving slowly towards Paris, having completed his work in the south. Summoning Fabert, that swift traveller overtook him at a castle near Roanne, on the upper Loire. There had been some question of appointing him Governor of Roussillon, and the report had got abroad, but the King preferred another old and tried officer for that post. Richelieu

then easily obtained from Louis the promise that Fabert should have the governorship of Sedan, and it was to impart the welcome news that the Cardinal called him from Roussillon. He bade him, however, keep silent, testify no joy, offer no compliments, so that he might appear to learn the fact from the King's lips, a characteristic example of Richelieu's method. "You are so disinterested," he said, "that if we do not take care of your affairs you will make a bad bargain. The King of his own motion bestows this post, but I will provide for your establishment. Madame Fabert shall have a thousand crowns per month as table allowance; the King will grant ten thousand crowns for plate and furniture; the rest I shall order without consulting you." Done with his usual magnificence and breadth.

Fabert quietly retired as he was bidden, and hastened to the Court at Paris, where Louis confirmed the words of his minister, and directed the new Governor to assume his post at once. He was sick of the quartain ague, but there was no time to lose; and on the 30th of September, Mazarin, aided by a body of Guards and Swiss, having previously performed the delicate task of dismissing the Duchess of Bouillon and her troops, Fabert marched in and took his place as the chief of the sovereign principality of Sedan. He was near the end of his forty-third year, and the thirtieth of his service. So far had he come by dint of courage, toil and devotion, on his way to the highest military honour. It is recorded that Turenne, on hearing that he might have sway in Sedan, said to Fabert, "If my house must lose this place, I would much rather that you had the government than any other officer in the army." They had served together on many fields since 1635, when they first met, and Turenne's firm friendship and high regard are not the least valuable testimonies to the ability and character of Abraham Fabert.

CHAPTER XII.

LOUIS AND RICHELIEU.

BEFORE describing the conduct of the Governor of Sedan in his new sphere of labour, we may here place conveniently some brief comments on the two men who had so large an influence on his fortunes ; for he lost both his friends and masters within eight months after he took possession of the territory. The minister died on the 4th December, 1642, and the long-suffering monarch expired on the 14th May, 1643. Their lives were and are inseparably woven together, but the shining threads in the tissue have been allotted to the haughty Cardinal, the sober hues alone to the modest King. We may, perhaps, be allowed to differ, with proper respect, from the great artists who designed and wrought the fabric which fills them with delight.

The career of Richelieu, his character, his actions, have attracted the praise and censure of historians, who applaud and accept his policy. They glory in the minister who hoped to extend the dominions of the French Crown until they were girdled by "the natural frontiers of ancient Gaul." There are others who, admiring his patriotism and sharing his love of domination, rebuke him because, in the relentless pursuit of his superb design, he mowed down everything which stood or seemed to stand between him and the accomplishment of his double purpose—absolute government at home, and the supremacy of France in Europe. They lament

and they denounce the Tarquinian policy which cut off the tallest heads, slew great nobles as well as subordinate conspirators—respecting a Montmorency not more than a Cinq Mars—filled the prisons, multiplied the exiles, crushed the political Huguenots, coerced the Parlements, and set aside the States-General. They condemn severely fiscal and financial devices, which, unjust and often shameful, wasted the national resources, piled up debt, stimulated corruption, encouraged venality, promoted fraud, and stung the beggared peasants into useless revolt. They are eloquent and impressive when passing judgment on the means employed by the great minister—but the great minister's vast and costly projects, defensive and aggressive alike, are not merely sanctioned, they are sanctioned with pride and exultation. Yet, attentively considered, it will be seen that by no processes other than those he adopted could the same results which he achieved have been achieved in the same time and in the same circumstances.

If it were desirable to establish the indisputable authority of the central power, then it was necessary to beat down the political pretensions of the Huguenots, who aimed at something more than religious freedom; to enforce submission from the grand seigneurs who defied the law like Bouteville, or took the field like Montmorency, or men of lesser rank who plotted like Chalais and Cinq Mars; nay, it was necessary to constrain, if not to punish, all, whatever their rank, who were more or less leagued with Spain, even Queen Anne, the Duke of Orleans, and the Duke of Bouillon. If, again, it was desirable to wage war on Spain and the Empire, in order to push forward on all sides the boundaries of France, how could that be done effectually while there was anarchy and faction fighting within France, not only a strife of noble against noble, an eager competition for place and power, but an actual co-operation between internal

parties and external enemies ; so that in order to attain the great end, the aggrandizement of France, it was imperative that the noblesse should be subdued, and those who dealt in treason punished. The end does not justify the means, but those who hold that Richelieu's end was just, and that, as a patriot, he is not only entitled to gratitude but to reverence, are bound to accept his means, bloody and oppressive as they were, since, unless they had been applied, there would soon have been no Richelieu, he would have died by the hand of an assassin, and no such manifestation of the power and splendour of France, as that in which his countrymen take delight, for there was but one man of his stamp in France, himself.

In like manner the fiscal exactions, the financial expedients, find their excuse in the necessity for revenue to carry on a government of concentration, and a war of conquest and glory. When the objects in view are condemned by those who adore them, it will be time to admit that their censures are justified ; but the same people are not permitted to intoxicate themselves with the glory and gain, and flatter their sense of virtue by pouring out righteous invective on the dreadful cost by which they were won. Still less is it allowable to magnify the moral grandeur of the aim, and ascribe to immoral passions—an insatiable love of power, personal hatreds, unscrupulous malignity—the actions by which the grand aim was to be attained. Richelieu was human, and he was a Frenchman in his virtues and vices, but he was thoroughly sincere. He believed that he was working out his vast schemes for the glory of France, that hostility to him was hostility to them and to her ; and then, to use the terrible words ascribed to him which, if he did not speak them, represent his thought and actions, when once he had made up his mind he went straight towards his goal, he overturned, he cut down all before him, and afterwards

covered his deeds with his scarlet robe.¹ The victims who survived shuddered and shrieked, and with Pierre Corneille, found the sole motives which animated the Cardinal to be "pride, ambition, interest, and avarice." Pride and ambition there was in abundance, and these were powerful springs of action. But the end achieved was the thing dear to Richelieu, and he defined it when he said on his death-bed, speaking to the King, "I leave your kingdom in a higher degree of glory and reputation than it has ever attained, and all your enemies struck down and humbled." He was not the first nor the last who sacrificed everything to power and glory, to enlarge the boundaries, to exalt the name, to secure the dominance of France in Europe. Those purposes could not be accomplished except at great cost—the destruction of provincial and municipal franchises, as well as the independence of the noblesse; the foundation, if not the creation of that irresistible State (*l'État*) personified in the son of Louis XIII.; the conversion of a Monarchy limited in its authority by great territorial lords, local councils, Parlements, and States-General, into an Absolutism tempered by epigrams. Richelieu is a colossal figure in French history, but his work must be taken as a whole. Not the welfare of France, her power and glory were his gods; and if he offered up on their altars the abiding interests of his country, he also sacrificed himself, killing his weak body by the literally endless labours of his spirit, which wore its physical environment into a mere atomy of pain, yet to the last remained itself triumphant and serene. He embodied the French thirst for glory and supremacy, which was again exemplified in Louis XIV. and Napoleon Bonaparte; and those who approve their grandiose design must share the burdens inseparable from its prosecution—bloodshed and crime. The moral lesson of Richelieu's

¹ Quand une fois j'ai pris ma resolution, je vais à mon but. je renverse tout, je fauche tout, et ensuite je couvre tout de ma soutane rouge.

life is lost if we heartily sanction his projects, and repudiate with a holy indignation the rigorous severity, the thorough-going character of the methods by which alone they could be attained. "*Qui veut la fin veut les moyens.*" More consistent than his devotees, Richelieu vindicated and accepted both. It is that haughty veracity of mind which makes him great even to those, if any there be, who detest alike his objects and his means.

Whatever judgment is passed on the minister must be passed on the King, who selected him because he was a man of genius, who sustained him throughout unflinchingly, because he had a boundless trust in the Cardinal's practical ability to achieve the objects which were common to both. Sully, a competent judge of character, who had closely watched and measured the young Bishop of Luçon as the spokesman of the clergy in 1614, the Queen-mother's man of business, and a subordinate member of the government, called the King's choice of Richelieu an "inspiration from Heaven." It was doubtless something much less—the judgment of a silent, observant, thoughtful prince, who had lofty ideas of his duty as a man and a monarch. He discerned in the prelate the qualities essential to the working out of his desires, and if these were enlarged as time went on by the constant intercourse of two such men, fundamentally they were common to both. The long unbroken partnership, which resisted such a series of formidable assaults—from a selfish mother, a foreign wife, a mean and cowardly brother, great nobles, ambitious schemers, brilliant and unscrupulous dames, hungry place-hunters, conspirators and assassins—testifies not only to the original perspicacity of the King, but to his iron will and unshaken constancy. Something also to his magnanimity, seeing that the very trials to which he was exposed, the painful struggles he was compelled to endure in defence of his minister, tested his strength of mind

to the uttermost ; and to his forbearance, because that minister, absorbed in pushing on his stupendous plans, was sometimes irritating and often exacting in his demands for confidence and power.

Louis XIII. stood these exorbitant tests, and never for a moment deserted the man to whom he was so closely allied, and who served him as few monarchs have been served. Richelieu's perpetual alarms for his own safety, personal as well as ministerial, were due to his nervous constitution and his position in relation to the State. The King had no fear of assassination ; the Cardinal felt its powers every day. The King was never haunted by the idea of deposition ; the minister, who was not minister by divine right or inheritance, knew that dismissal was possible, and trembled at the slightest breath of hostility, covert or open. The King could not only bear contradiction, he loved a loyal, manly frankness, and to the last allowed men to talk before him in order to ascertain exactly what at least they professed to think. Pulling his hat low down on his forehead, he listened attentively, kept his opinion to himself, and left them to their impressions of the effect they had produced, and these were often wrong. Richelieu, intent on his purposes, was angered by opposition, perhaps because it hurt his self-love, perhaps because it was a hindrance, and, whenever he could, he always rode down his antagonists. The curious thing is that the King, because he was temperate, patient, and reserved, is credited with an ever-present suspicion and jealousy, whereas the Cardinal was suspicion and jealousy incarnate ; the King always trusted him ; yet, although he had abundant reason to do so, he never thoroughly trusted the King. That was a defect which must be traced to extreme sensitiveness and an active imagination, not to the conduct of the monarch towards his minister. The sentence imputed to Richelieu—" that the *petit coucher* gave him more

trouble than all the affairs of Europe"—is a measure of the gnawing anxiety which beset him through life, lest, in the end, his enemies should prevail. When he implied, in a famous letter, that the King was ready to wink at his assassination, that revolting injustice was born of his ingrained distrust, heightened by his prolonged and acute bodily sufferings. For so great a man Richelieu fretted too much; it was a waste of power.

History has dealt unjustly with the character of Louis XIII., who was the best if not the greatest of his house. His maladies even, brought on by medical treatment, which makes one readily understand Molière's hatred of the Sangrado school, are treated as faults; his chastity is food for scoffing, and is regarded not as a proof of strength, which it was, but weakness of character; his reticence and undemonstrative habits, his very faithfulness to the able minister of his choice, have been used as evidence that he was the unwilling slave of that minister, a trembling "idle King," given up to frivolities, without intellectual force and without a will. No picture could be more untrue. Dazzled by the splendour of Richelieu, his friends and enemies alike have combined to establish his pre-eminence at the expense of the King who was art and part in all his deeds; and thus, in contemporary memoirs, as well as in later histories, Louis figures, where he is not effaced altogether, as a foil to the man who, until Louis XIV. set out in the pursuit of glory, seemed to realize most completely the French ideal. If so, his renown must at least be shared with his sovereign, who worked steadily by his side for eighteen years, entered cordially into all the schemes designed to achieve a common purpose, and, by his single strength, upheld him against a host of relentless and persevering foes. Madame de Motteville, who was devoted to Queen Anne, and therefore a hostile witness, says that the King had "*beaucoup d'esprit et*

de connoissances," and that "the Cardinal de Richelieu himself had often said of him, that in the Council he always gave the best advice, and frequently suggested expedients when affairs were most embarrassing." The first Duke of St. Simon also told her that Louis, from a principle of equity, being convinced that he was faithful, sustained the Cardinal against the attacks of Marie de Médicis, the original cause of his alienation from her. Fontenay-Mareuil has testified to his industry, punctuality, and conscientiousness in the discharge of his duties when a youth, *voulant toujours, quelque jeune qu'il fût, que les affaires allassent bien*—habits which grew stronger as he grew older. He shrewdly remarked, when worried by his ministers in the days before Richelieu was appointed, "They wish me to share all their dreams, but if they sometimes impute even to me projects which never entered my head, what can I think of the stories they tell me about other people?" His principal grief against the Cardinal, writes Madame de Motteville, was that his minister did all he could to hinder him from taking command in the field—one of the bagatelles, perhaps, which he told Fabert were so much outweighed by long services. History has been unjust to Louis. The "*soutane rouge*" covers a great deal more than the deeds of the Cardinal—it hides the King. All a typical French historian, M. Henri Martin, can say of him is, that "France owes him some gratitude," because "he sacrificed his pride to his duty towards the State; he possessed a virtue rare among mediocrities (*hommes médiocres*), that of accepting with resignation the domination of genius." He "understood that God created him a subject; he submitted religiously to the King sent by Providence!" A fine example of that contempt blended with injustice, which is not rare among the worshippers of Richelieu, but emphatically ungrateful in them, because the mortal they adore depended literally for the breath of his political existence

upon the hearty, constant, and intelligent support of the monarch they despise. The truth is, that the minister comes down to us in a blaze of glory not all his own, because his master and confidant, if he did not disdain, never sought the applause of posterity. His enemies, at an early date, called him a *Roi Fainéant*, his friends surnamed him the Just. The true appreciation lies between the two. He was a hard-working King, and, as the world goes, a good man; but, at least according to modern political and judicial ideas, whatever he may have been as a man, as a monarch he was not just. He must share with his magnificent servant the iniquity as well as the renown of his reign.

When the Cardinal died, and his sovereign, reduced to a mere skeleton by his poignant sufferings, found his last lodging (*dernier logis*) in St. Denis, Fabert lost two friends, and at each blow felt his position insecure. Happily for him Mazarin, who knew his worth, had captivated the Queen-Regent, and thus the loss he sustained had no sinister effects on the fortunes of the Governor of Sedan. To him, after this not unnecessary digression, we must now return, and strive to pourtray him under the reign of Anne and Mazarin.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOVERNOR OF SEDAN.

UNDER the walls of a castle, built in the fifteenth century by Everard III., the grandfather of that William de la Marek whose historical name is the Wild Boar of the Ardennes, the town of Sedan gradually arose and flourished until it needed walls and outworks, which were supplied during the two succeeding centuries, notably by Henri de la Tour, Viscount of Turenne, who, marrying the heiress of the territory, took the title of Duke of Bouillon, although the neighbouring town of Bouillon had been snatched away by a Bishop of Liège. Mademoiselle de Sedan, as Sully calls the young lady, was the daughter of Robert de la Marek and Françoise de Bourbon, both converts to Calvinism; and as the husband selected for her by Henry IV. was of the same persuasion, Sedan became a quasi-French possession and an asylum for the harassed Huguenots. The heiress died soon after her marriage, and the fortunate Duke, by allying himself with the house of Nassau, still further linked Sedan with the Protestant cause. His eldest son, Frederick Maurice, whom we have seen deeply engaged in the Cinq Mars conspiracy, took to wife a Catholic lady, and by her influence he reverted to the faith of Rome; but that conversion did not impair the security of his Protestant subjects, who still remained the dominant party in municipal politics as well as religion. The sudden change in their rulers naturally created friction,

so that Fabert's firmness and tact were at once put to a severe test. As the representative of the French Crown he had to overcome a domestic opposition which thought that it had all to lose by the unwelcome transfer. While Richelieu lived, and after his death, the Governor was supported, and he was able to establish the new order with a strong hand.

The political opposition which he encountered grew out of resistance to the administrative changes conferring enlarged authority on the Governor, and lessening that of the officials; nor was it quelled until the principal malcontents were dismissed. The people, in fact, could not feel sure that the whirligig of faction would not bring back the Duke, who persisted in declaring that he had only signed away his inheritance when compelled, and who foolishly dreamed that he could persuade Anne of Austria to give back what her little son had received from his sire. The penalty, of course, fell upon the more fiery of his followers, active in Sedan, some of whom were executed by the Governor, who held that prompt punishment was true clemency, since a little bloodshed saved much. So for many years the friends of the deposed Duke conspired, but the resolute Governor was always more than a match for them. The religious difficulty, enhanced as it was by secular complexities, required dexterous handling. The Catholics had not only lost their ascendancy for nearly a century, they had also lost endowments and tithes, some of which fell into lay hands. Fabert appealed to the spirit of toleration professed by the Huguenots, and pledged his word that their rights should be respected, but at an early period in his reign he restored the Catholic usages by a significant demonstration. He not only ordered that the host should be carried publicly, in solemn state, to the bed of a dying man, he himself bore a torch in the procession. That step was followed up by an edict which certainly infringed the limits of toleration, for, not content with the infliction of penalties

upon all who obstructed Catholic rites, it shut up the shops on Catholic fête days, and forbade, which perhaps was wise, religious controversies, public or private. In short, the dominant party acted like that which it succeeded, and both piqued themselves on their toleration. It must be said, nevertheless, that the Huguenots were not persecuted, they merely ceased to be supreme; but they in turn had to endure the daily spectacle of their triumphant rivals.

The political turmoil, the strife of factions in Paris which preceded and followed the death of Louis XIII., raised hopes soon to be dispelled. The Bastille gave up its notable prisoners—Bassompierre, Vitry, Cramail; the exiles flocked back from the provinces and foreign lands; the Parlement quashed the will of Louis, and recovered some power. It seemed for months uncertain what influence would prevail in the court of the Queen-Regent; and the Duke of Bouillon encouraged his partisans while he deluded himself. As the winter advanced the ambitious nobles, male and female, began to perceive that Mazarin, who had won the heart of Queen Anne, would wield the power of the State. Bassompierre, on emerging from the Bastille, said that he saw no difference in Paris, except that the horses had no tails and the men no beards.

Madame de Chevreuse, although summoned back, or permitted to return, was coldly welcomed by her early friend; and Madame de Hautefort was received with scarcely more affection. Mazarin, who was a Cardinal, but not a priest, had succeeded to Richelieu; and the main difference perceptible was that the new minister had gentle, soft, pleasant, yet deceitful manners, that he had no fear, no rancour, no generosity; but that he was as resolute, despite his apparent mildness, as the nobler and larger-minded prelate-statesman who left the Italian as a legacy to the French Crown. So from him Turenne, still a Protestant, got his Marshal's *bâton*,

but from him Frederick Maurice could only obtain fair speeches. The decisive word was put in the mouth of Anne, who declared point-blank to the Duke that she would not give up Sedan. Towards the end of the struggle between Mazarin and his rivals, who were all lesser men and none more honest, Fabert was summoned to Paris, where he was detained three months, and then he was sent back to his fortress with the rank of *Maréchal de Camp* (Lieut.-General), enlarged civil powers, and a special commission directing him to administer in the name of Louis XIV. the oath of fidelity to the inhabitants of a territory thenceforth French in fact, though still nominally neutral.

It is unreasonable to believe that the Protestant majority willingly acquiesced in a transfer which deprived them of ascendancy, but they were constrained to recognize the equity of a Governor who kept them well represented in their "sovereign council," and who, when two high officials fled rather than swear, filled the vacant posts with two other respected citizens also believers in the Protestant creed. The most famous among the ministers, Pierre du Moulin, a veteran in the Huguenot ranks, dedicated a book to Fabert in the spring of this very year 1644, which dedication from so learned and pious a man is a striking testimony to his tact, his resolution, and his equity. In a short time, says the pastor, he had "won the affections of the population," so borne himself that "the two religions dwelt in peace side by side;" for his vigilance enabled them to sleep securely, his foresight relieved them of their fears. The eulogium takes due note of a permanent habit of Fabert from his youth up, when it records the fact that he occupied his leisure by reading good books, whereby he had acquired "a great knowledge of the affairs of this world and the works of God." The venerable preacher naïvely says that he was an example of what could be produced by native good-

ness, joined to a large experience. The Pastor must have rejoiced when, shortly after the publication of his book, the new governor obtained an edict from the Crown which confirmed old franchises and immunities, spiritual and secular, which preserved existing "temples" in Sedan, Raucourt, and St. Menges, promised new ones in Givonne and Francheval, and separate cemeteries for each religion. Perhaps the Protestants were not so well satisfied with the qualification which ordained that the ecclesiastical revenues should be rendered to the rightful owners, a clause striking alike at temporal and spiritual appropriators. Nevertheless, Fabert's energy, patience, and rectitude gained so many advantages and exemptions for his principality, that he really was beloved as well as esteemed. When a certain Fournier, a brewer, partisan of the Duke of Bouillon, and agent of Gaston, Duke of Orleans, having formed a conspiracy to betray the place to the Spaniards, was discovered, arrested, tried, condemned and executed, Fabert, departing from custom, abstained from shutting the gates and putting the garrison under arms, in order to show the people how thoroughly he trusted them. The Archbishop of Rheims, who visited Sedan soon afterwards, to settle the affairs and recover the revenues of the Church, declared in a letter to Mazarin, that the people of both religions had done him due honour; that "M. Fabert, by his gentleness, held them in obedience," and that, except by his advice, nothing had been done in this weighty affair. So that, after two years of trial and steady work, the Governor had gained the praise of two men so far removed from each other as the Protestant pastor and the Catholic Archbishop, and stood well with such worldlings as Mazarin and Queen Anne.

The territory over which he ruled occupied an anomalous yet favourable position—it was neutral ground. War might rage all around, yet the little area on both banks of the

Meuse was exempt theoretically, and often practically, from its scourge.

By special conventions the governors of Luxembourg and Sedan agreed that neither should prey upon the other, or exact contribution by means of *les courses*—incursions of armed men, which we should now call raids. Fabert made the most of this singular situation, his constant aim being to preserve order, encourage agriculture, and promote trade. Yet, strange to say, he, the lord of a neutral land, was not precluded from aiding his neighbour and master, the King of France. When the youthful Enghien was so keenly watching the Spanish army which swooped down at Rocroi, it was Fabert who warned him in time that Beck was on the march from Luxembourg to join De Mello, thereby inciting him to effect that fine movement which brought on the battle and victory before Beck could arrive on the field. Later in the same year, 1643, Fabert was in constant communication with Enghien, who visited him at Sedan on his way to besiege Thionville; and in 1644 the Governor despatched a regiment of infantry, which he had raised, to reinforce the army under Enghien and Turenne. That regiment excited the admiration of the young captain, fought bravely in the sanguinary battles near Friburg, while it is recorded that the only foot soldiers who withstood the fierce charge of John de Werth at Nordlingen were the battalions of Fabert and Wall, "*Irlandais*." The organization and discipline of the Sedan regiment has a special place in the military annals of the time, showing how much sounder were the principles of Fabert than those which prevailed elsewhere.

It was raised in the spring months of 1644, by means of recruiting agents sent through the small territory, who enlisted such men as were willing and competent to serve. The names of these recruits were registered in Sedan, and

each then received clothes, arms, and a bounty. By these means he collected 1200 men, who were divided into twelve companies, whereof two-thirds carried muskets and one-third pikes. The officers were paid a fixed sum every month and the rank and file every week; so that Fabert adopted, if he did not introduce, the principle of voluntary enlistment, regular pay, and strict supervision in quarters—the men were, in part, billeted on the inhabitants—while he abolished, at least in his troops, the vicious custom of the purchase and sale of commissions. The drill and discipline of the corps he superintended himself, putting the whole, in turn, through garrison duty, and training the rest in constant field exercises. Composed of such admirable materials, and formed by such a master, it is not surprising that a judge like Enghein, when a battalion drawn from these companies joined his army in Champagne, and fought under his eye at Friburg and Nordlingen, should have praised their conduct in camp and their effective valour in battle. It may be said, at once, that Fabert's system was too good to last. The government failed to supply the needful funds; he could not wring from Mazarin even the sums he advanced himself from time to time, and after striving for two years, he was obliged to abandon an experiment which, if sustained and extended, would have saved money and improved the quality of the troops. The abolition of purchase and sale made no way at all outside Sedan, and lingered, indeed, until the Revolution.

He now saw more service in the field. While Enghein and Turenne carried the arms of France into the heart of Bavaria, reverses fell upon La Motte Houdancourt, who commanded in Catalonia. Lerida, which frowns from its rock above the Segre, proved as disastrous to him as it afterwards did to the victor of Rocroi, and the hold of the French upon the revolted province was shaken, wherefore Mazarin placed the unfortunate Marshal la Motte in prison, and appointed Harcourt and

Plessis-Praslin to restore French fortunes. Fabert, having some knowledge of the region, being summoned to Paris, advised Mazarin to gain possession of Rosas, a strong post on the sea south of the Pyrenees, commanding a safe roadstead. His suggestion, not made probably for the first time, since just before his death Richelieu named the place as one needful to the secure occupation of Catalonia, was adopted by the minister, who despatched Fabert to aid in the operation. But he did not enjoy his usual good fortune; for, sent in advance with some light cavalry towards Figueras, and moving, it is asserted, without due precaution, he was suddenly set upon by a force of Spanish horse, captured, and led a prisoner into Rosas, which he had come to besiege. It is not likely that so experienced though daring a captain would march in the hills carelessly, and more reasonable to believe his report that the cause of his capture was the bad behaviour of his troopers. He said drily, in a letter to Mazarin, that he assumed that the people with him would act as even ordinary cavalry were accustomed to act,—by which we suppose he meant, follow their leader,—but he was entirely mistaken. They left him in the lurch to fight it out, which he did, until overpowered. The Court was moved on his behalf; proposals of exchange were instantly made, but the amount of ransom was a stumbling-block, and Fabert remained in Rosas until the end of May, when it was taken. The piquant incident in this adventure is that, incredible as it may sound, Fabert, the prisoner, drew the act of capitulation, which stipulated for his own release without ransom. Harcourt, the "*Perle des Caudets*," wished to retain a soldier whom he knew so well, having need, he said, of "men like him"; but a royal letter, dating from the opening of the campaign, directed Fabert to return as soon as Rosas fell; so he was back at Sedan in July.

Here he found it necessary to tighten up the administration,

which had grown slack in his absence. Fresh obligations of supervision were imposed on the supreme council, the police regulations were stiffened, and the tavern-keepers were ordered to close their doors when the retreat sounded. Perhaps it was less the stringent control thus exercised than his constant efforts to strengthen the fortifications, which drew on him a specially malevolent attack imputing disloyalty, which made Mazarin exclaim, "Ah, if we cannot trust Fabert, there is no longer any friend in whom confidence can be reposed." The best answer to the libels, at least so far as the Government were concerned, was that Queen Anne and her cherished minister summoned Fabert to the Councils of the King, an honour all the more conspicuous because, at that date, so says Colonel Bourelly, soldiers were very rare in the Council of State and the Privy Council. The nomination did not carry with it the right of entry to either body, both, for practical purposes, being composed of men actually part of the government. Fabert's intimate relations with Mazarin, however, made him something more than a Councillor in name.

In the middle of 1646 the Cardinal called him to Paris. Having on hand a quarrel with the Pope, Innocent X., Mazarin had sent an army under Prince Thomas of Savoy to capture Orbitello, in the Maremma, long a Spanish possession, and the army had been forced to raise the siege. Fabert, summoned to consult on the best way of wiping out the affront, recommended an attack upon Piombino and on Porto Longone in the adjacent island of Elba. Piombino lies at the southern foot of the dark headland on whose northern summit stood Etruscan Populonia, the cyclopean ruins of which still exist. The military reason given for these operations was that the seizure of both would harass the Spanish maritime communications between Naples and Spain. They had their real origin, so far as Mazarin was concerned, in his desire

to put a pressure on the Pope, who, having agreed to confer a Red Hat on Peter Mazarin, in return for an Abbey which the said Peter relinquished to Pamphilo, the Pope's nephew, broke his pledged word. The expedition was resolved, and Fabert was despatched with it to secure harmony and common action between its commanders, La Meilleraye and Du Plessis-Praslin. He was successful—Pionbino surrendered to a mere demonstration; Porto Longone required a siege in form, which lasted nearly three weeks. It was chiefly remarkable for the daring and activity of Fabert, not only in reconnoitring the sea as well as the land front,—the first in a boat, the second by pushing alone up to the counterscarp, where he wounded with his sword the sentinel who fired on him,—but by his active personal labours in the trenches, where he behaved as he did at Saverne, La Capelle, and Bapaume, when he was winning his way as a captain. He gave the credit of the result to La Meilleraye, and La Meilleraye handsomely gave it to him.

It was easier to capture a fortress than to extract from Mazarin the payment of just debts. The Government owed Fabert some sixteen thousand pounds sterling, spent in maintaining his regiment. Mazarin referred him to Emery, head of the Finance Department, a very able but unscrupulous official, who said, what was no doubt true, that all the money in his strong box and much more was already pledged by the Cardinal to satisfy obligations incurred for ends of the greatest importance. "What," said Fabert, "can there be anything more pressing than the pay of a regiment exposed to every peril for the glory of the King and the defence of the State?" And he went off to request that he should be relieved from the duty of keeping up a regiment for which the State would not pay. So it came to pass that the model body was broken up, one-third only remaining to garrison Sedan. Months elapsed before, through the intervention of Chavigny, one-half

his debt was remitted in coin, and he was authorized to complete the total by selling corn and wood from the royal domain in his principality. At the same time he still further increased the defensive capabilities of Sedan on the front towards Floing, and while he induced the community to establish at the gates an *octroi* on liquors, wherewith to furnish funds, he did not hesitate to make advances from his own pocket, uncertain whether or not they would be repaid. It was on this occasion that, in answer to remonstrances from friends, he is said to have spoken the words engraved on the pedestal of his statue at Metz. They make him declare that, in order to save the place confided to him by the King, if it were necessary to thrust into a breach himself, his family, and all his goods, he should not hesitate to do so. The spirit is Fabert's, but we may well doubt whether it took that form of words, when we remember that the sole authority for them is that Courtilz de Sandras, once a captain in the regiment of Champagne, of whom Bayle speaks as an inventor of fables, and whom Voltaire describes compendiously as a writer who inundated Europe with fictions. Another enterprise of Fabert's shows his anxiety to promote solid industry. Sedan had a poor fabric for coarse cloth. The Governor enabled a partnership of manufacturers to found a factory, where they soon produced woollen goods which rivalled those of Holland. He was ever solicitous to cherish and improve agriculture, industry, and trade throughout his petty state, which, even when encircled by war, prospered under his constant care. One fault conspicuous in Mazarin was that which the wit defined as "the fault of the Dutch." Although in his debt, he requested his faithful servant to advance the money necessary to raise a body of recruits, horse and foot. Fabert declined, pleading a poverty of credit and resources which imperilled his fortress and its garrison, but he raised the cavalry required as soon as the Cardinal sent the needed

funds—probably borrowed money, as the State revenues at that time had been anticipated for several months, one might say years. Neither Mazarin nor Richelieu knew anything of finance except in the most rudimentary forms. They raised money how they could by imposts of many kinds, and by the sale of places; but they lived on advances from loan contractors, whose rates of interest were proportioned to the badness of the securities and the present needs of the State.

CHAPTER XIV.

DURING THE FRONDE.

OUT of the fiscal oppression and the financial anarchy grew the revolt known in history as the *Fronde*—a picturesque wrestle of persons and classes, filling France with trouble and confusion for nearly four years. When Paris broke loose from control every group fought for its own hand. Although none invoked her, it was the day of Sainte Opportune. The Parlement of Paris, mainly judges and lawyers, endeavoured to rival the Parliament of England, and grasp supremacy for themselves by securing the power of the purse. The great nobles of both sexes, who modestly qualified themselves as the “Importants,” and who believed in their divine right, thought that the dominant status to which they aspired could then be attained. The Princes of the Blood, even the weak and treacherous Duke of Orleans, hoped to recover a position of authority; while the young Prince of Condé, “the hero,” lustrous with the glories of Rocroi, Friburg, Nordlingen, and Lens, his latest yet not least brilliant exploit, overtopped all his noble and royal competitors in ambition as well as ability. On the other side were Queen Anne and Mazarin, whose tower of strength was the possession of the Crown, the person of the boy king, the great administrative offices filled by able men, a background of the baser money-lending element, which is never to be despised with impunity, and the command of that old

mighty influence, very real in the seventeenth century—Loyalty. At bottom, the “dim common populations,” worked, paid, suffered, starved, at intervals supplied cruel mobs for useless street riots, and always armies for the factions and the Crown. The long agony of more than four years, spreading out over France, ended, as from the prevalent selfishness of all the factions it was bound to end, in the firm establishment of that absolute monarchy, tempered by epigrams, which is so famous and fateful in European story. With the incidents of the melodramatic contest we shall not concern ourselves, except in so far as they affect the subject of this Memoir, to whom the self-seeking exhibited on all sides was as repugnant as the wasteful anarchy which he abhorred.

His first care was for his little domain. A life of hard work, many wounds, and the encroachments of age had, at length, impaired his health. He declined a command on the Flemish frontier in 1648, and until late in the year he did not quit his post, except to drink the waters at Bourbonne, in that highland region near the sources of the Meuse, styled Bassigny before the Revolution broke up the ancient territorial divisions. In the autumn he suddenly journeyed to Paris, not to take part in the drama, but to aid a friend, Chavigny, who, he learned, had been imprisoned by Mazarin, first in Vincennes, where he was governor, then in Havre. A certain rivalry between these two subordinates of Richelieu sprang up after his death, and the Cardinal obtaining the upper hand through his influence with the Queen, kept it. Fabert, really attached to Chavigny personally, was not likely to desert him when fortune frowned, and he went straight to Mazarin and boldly pleaded for his old comrade. The Cardinal generally, by nature and calculation, was *doux* and *douceroux*, to use the language of Madame de Motteville; but however suave he may have been in manner, he was hard enough in fact. Other and more dangerous

adversaries were in Paris—the towering Parlement and the ferocious mob ; Condé, with immense pretensions backed by the army ; De Retz, not yet cardinal, potent, active, formidable, yet almost as variable as the wind. After a few weeks of detention, Chavigny, who had really been plotting against his rival, was released, but ordered to reside on his estates ; and whether it contributed to that result or not, Fabert's resolute intervention on his behalf redounds to his own honour. "I have exiled your friend from Paris, less to give him pain than to keep him out of mischief," was the Cardinal's characteristic remark to Fabert.

For three months he remained in Paris, watching the turmoil. It was the period when the Parlement obtained its greatest triumphs, and extorted the large concessions from the reluctant Court. Then the Queen and her minister, who was hated by all parties, won over Condé by granting him Stenay, Dun, Jametz, and Clermont, a high price ; the King and Court hurried to St. Germain, and Condé set about that blockade of Paris which drew from the Parlement a declaration of outlawry against Mazarin, but in due time exerted a pressure which partially reversed the popular victory. Fabert's fidelity was now proved. In the first week of the New Year three of Mazarin's nieces were placed under his charge, and he escorted them safely from the perils of Paris, through the country swarming with guerilla bands, and lodged them in his fortress on the Meuse.

He bore with him also an enlargement of his powers, most necessary at a time when the Duke of Bouillon and his Duchess, both warm adherents of the Frondeurs, were using the opportunity to regain possession of Sedan. Nothing could be more natural on their part, but he who held the principality for the King was the last man likely to fail in fulfilling his trust. He, at all events, was determined that, however fiercely disorder might run riot in Paris and else-

where, order should be upheld in Sedan. Therefore, leaving nothing to chance, he adopted rigorous measures to expel the malcontents, prohibit communication with the chiefs of their party, keep out strangers, and, to remove temptation from his garrison, he caused the guard for the day to be selected by lot. In short, he cleared for action. So much by way of prevention. In addition he made ready against probable contingencies, and the steps he took show how the Governor trusted his people, and how the trust was reciprocated. Renewing an old ducal ordinance, he called out more than five thousand men from the city, the bourgs and villages for local defence, and, being thorough in all he did, he made them effective in drill and armament, marked out alarm posts, and provided a simple code of signals. As a Protestant pastor said, he offered the population the choice between infamy and glory; they accepted what he calls glory, but which we prefer to name duty. Moreover, then and later, he scattered bulletins or leaflets on the frontier and in Champagne to counteract the abounding pamphlets used by the Frondeurs. The danger from the Duke of Bouillon was increased by the defection of Turenne, who was not mollified by being made a Marshal of France, though, for the moment, the peril passed away because he failed to carry with him the Germans and Swiss on the Upper Rhine. Fabert appears to have been surprised that the "prudent" Turenne should have so lightly joined the opposition. There was, too, a species of truce in the capital; the Court went to Compiègne in May, and thither, at the Cardinal's request, Fabert carried the precious nieces, one of whom, Laura Mancini, was about to become the wife of the Duke of Mercœur, son of the Duke of Vendôme, a match which aroused the anger of Condé, who never liked the Italian, and hated the Vendômes.

Returning to his fortress, Fabert was obliged to dismiss a

certain Baron de Mygène, the King's lieutenant, who was detected in playing a double part, and having relations with the Bouillon party which imperilled Sedan. The Baron had been warned, reprieved, offered a chance of reparation, but he was convicted of a gross piece of duplicity and sent his way. Another trouble then beset the Governor. It was reported that d'Erlach's Germans were to march through his principality. Now, they were notorious plunderers, and Fabert, naturally wishing to spare his people and villages, vehemently remonstrated, finally threw the responsibility on the Cardinal, and did not rest until the route was altered. It is only fair to say that the detachment which ascended the left bank, to cross the Meuse near Mouzon, unexpectedly behaved well—perhaps because for once they were properly supplied and paid. The crimes committed by the military bands, who, often left destitute, helped themselves, enraged Fabert. "We live at a time," he wrote, "when the good folks suffer. God alone can remedy their woes." He added, "No human power can apply a remedy." It was some consolation that Raucourt was spared. His fits of discouragement were frequent in this dreary period. "From what I have suffered," he says, in a letter to Chavigny, "and from what I have seen others suffer during my life, I am made to think that men are the worst of all the animals; the good only seem to exist in order that the bad may have a field for (*donner moyen d'exercer*) their malice." Yet about the same time he was exhorting his friend, who much needed the exhortation, being a very worldly man, to remember God, France, the King, and his own family, and try to merit the reward which those may hope for "who renounce their own inclinations in order to promote the welfare of others." The cloud of depression did not long overshadow his mind, and its presence never interfered with the work to be done. He hungered for order and peace—the Treaty of Westphalia was signed in 1648, but

war with Spain went on—and though a strong, pious man, he had his moments of despair and his hours of moral pain.

Meanwhile the great conflict for power changed its base, but did not grow less intense. Fabert was in Paris, summoned thither by the Cardinal, when the quarrel between that wily person and Condé reached to bursting point. The “hero” had few qualities to sustain his pretensions, except his heroism and his rank. He had the greed of his father for places, honours, possessions, but not a spark of his father’s subserviency. He would have served under a Richelieu, he could not brook a Mazarin. Aiming at the first place in the State, it angered him to find the Cardinal ever in his path, and he could not control his temper sufficiently to wrestle in a political combat with a man he despised. His contempt for Queen Anne’s confidential minister was characteristically displayed in the famous scene, when quitting the Cardinal he scoffingly said, “*Adieu, Mars!*” Nor did he break with Mazarin only, he managed to excite the wrath of the original Frondeurs, and enrage Paris by his high-handed escapades. Perhaps he believed himself too great to be touched, at any rate he took no precautions; for his arrest in the Louvre at nightfall on January 18th, 1650, together with his brother the Prince of Conti and the Duke of Longueville, was a surprise. The bold act renewed the civil war, and brought it into the immediate neighbourhood of Sedan. Fabert, who had been in close intimacy with the Cardinal, travelled back to his government early in February, none too soon; for Turenne was already at Stenay, and his troopers were abroad in the Ardennes.

In fact, Madame de Longueville had set up a centre of revolt in her brother’s fortress. She was enterprising and she was beautiful. Madame de Motteville describes her charms with the fervour of a lover and the imagery of a poet. Her hair was a pale glittering yellow; the blue of her

soft brilliant eyes resembled that of the turquoise; no roses and lilies ever matched the red and white of her cheeks. Her figure was admirable; she looked more like an angel than a woman; and, says her female adorer, "it was impossible to see without loving and desiring to please her." No wonder she played so conspicuous a part in the Fronde, when she brought women as well as men to her feet. Neither her father nor her brother Condé extorts such eulogy from the accomplished Court lady. The elder prince, in his old age, was unkempt and unclean. He "thrust his generally dirty hair," says Madame, "behind his ears, so that he was not at all pleasant to look on." The "hero" fares little better at her hands. His face had an ugly shape; his mighty nose was aquiline; his mouth was "very disagreeable" because it was large and filled with prominent teeth; but his critic admits that his bright blue eyes had a proud expression, and that his whole countenance had in it something grand and fierce, and rather eagle-like. While he was making the most of his prison at Vincennes, his lovely sister and Turenne, who styled himself "Lieutenant-general of the King's army for the liberty of the princes," negotiated with the Spaniards. An army from the Low Countries entered France in the spring, and although Fabert at first feared that they would press far forward on the old line of the Oise, he soon came to the conclusion, when better informed, that the invaders were really weak, especially in cavalry, and that their energy would be soon exhausted. His judgment was verified when they fell back from Guise, but that only brought them near his region, which the Archduke Leopold approached to aid Turenne, and rendered him anxious for the safety of Sedan. Turenne, who intended to make a dash upon Vincennes with a body of horse, halted when he heard that the princes had been transferred to Marcoussis, a pleasant château about eighteen miles south of Paris, and beyond his reach. He

and his Spanish allies then turned upon Mouzon, which brought them perilously near to Sedan. Turenne, at the outset, had offered immunity to the principality, providing the Governor would furnish supplies to the levies assembled at Stenay, and when the offer was rejected, his foreign bands ravaged the territory and cruelly maltreated some villagers, yet could not stay. Fabert employed the interval of comparative quiet to get in the harvest, and on the approach of the enemy he called up the regiment of Navarre from Rocroi. When Mouzon was besieged in September he sent up succours in boats, some of which reached the garrison in time to defer yet not avert a capitulation. The garrison, Germans, marched to Sedan, and replaced Navarre, which returned to Rocroi; while a son-in-law of the gallant General Beck, killed at Lens, became Governor of Mouzon, somewhat to the vexation of Madame de Longueville. The allies now had a large territory on the Meuse, where they hoped to pass the winter in relative security. But the war had gone against the insurgents, notably at Bordeaux, where the princes' partizans made a great show, and the Government, able to bring up the troops from the south, resolved on a winter campaign.

Marshal du Plessis, acting on the suggestion of Fabert, suddenly laid siege to Rhetel in December and speedily took it, together with the citadel perched on a bluff above the town. Abandoned by his Spanish allies, Turenne, weak in numbers, unprepared for the vigorous line of action which Mazarin, though afflicted with gout, sanctioned and stimulated by his presence, nevertheless took the field and advanced into the bare country south of Rhetel between the Suippe and the Aire. Not quick enough to save the town, he was himself attacked at Sommepey, and utterly routed after a confused battle fought on a frosty December day. The unhappy Marshal fled to Montmédy; so that except in the capture of Mouzon he gained nothing, while Sedan was relieved from

the presence of a dangerous enemy. The lucky victor, Plessis-Praslin, plucked a laurel at Sommepey, but few thought the more of him, and none one whit the less of Turenne. An excellent gentleman and brave soldier, the conqueror was literally hurried into an action, which cost him a son, and gave him so curious a place in history. It is said of him that all esteemed his virtues, but dreaded his conversation, and they had some reason for their fears if it was as wearisome as his Memoirs. It is said that Ninon de l'Enclos, despite her old friendship for him, could not endure his talk. One day, when the Marshal prolonged a dull visit, she yawned and cried out, quoting Corneille—

O Ciel, que de vertus vous me faites haïr !

The same anecdote also is told of a Chevalier Choiseul; but perhaps there were two contemporaneous, brave, good, dull Frenchmen.

Towards the end of this troubled year, Fabert bought an estate in what is now the Côte d'Or, and was made a marquis. But the time to him was "out of joint." He felt keenly the miseries inflicted on the people of the frontier districts, and mourned over the discords which weakened his country. He opens his heart in letters to Chavigny, and expresses longings which that ambitious statesman could not have understood. The two men did not move on the same moral plane. Fabert's longing for peace and that freedom from civil contention which would have enabled him to labour effectually for his principality was not likely to be appreciated by one to whom banishment⁸⁸ from the excitement of Court politics was a lingering death. How he must have smiled when he learned that his friend, the Governor, sought a refuge from the bitterness aroused by the spectacle of disorder all around in the calm toils of gardening! Retirement from public life had charms in the distance, but reflection showed Fabert that he could not escape from his shadow. "My great weakness," he wrote,

“at least that which gives me most pain, is that I find no man whose conduct (*manière d'agir*) does not worry me in the long run.” He felt, also, that he could not act with the same freedom in private country life, without scandalizing his neighbours, as he could and did in the position to which he had been accustomed. Finally, he held always in the last resort, that “the King must be master and speak for himself” before he could abandon a post, Sedan, which might be a public mischief if it fell into disloyal hands. His confidences, and his pleadings with and for Chavigny, reveal his frank and honest character ; but Mazarin was right when he wrote, “M. de Chavigny takes good care to keep his councils and secrets from you” ; his dealings with both sections of the Fronde, and the threats, for example, which he levelled at the Cardinal. “Do not oblige me to set forth the history of your life,” he wrote, “and reveal to men what you would hide from God. I am ready to keep silence if you will change your conduct towards me.” Chavigny kept his secret, but had he known it, Fabert would have severely condemned that mode of political warfare, even when applied to a minister whose behaviour he did not relish, and whom he served because the minister represented the governing power, the Queen Regent’s authority. Friendship, and a passion for conciliation, made him steadily support Chavigny, whose double-dealing he learned somewhat late ; yet, so far as he could, he never failed to help him in misfortune as well as in fortune, until Chavigny died (1652), worn out in the fruitless struggle for power, and enraged because in the arts of duplicity he was far excelled by the Cardinal. What Fabert deplored bitterly was that a man so able as his old friend should not be serving the King ; and though to the last he strove to be a peace-maker, his efforts failed as they were bound to fail, seeing that Mazarin and Chavigny, adepts in craft and self-seeking, were incapable of trusting each other.

In the winter of 1650-51 the struggle between the minister and his foes was at its height. He had been triumphant in appearance because the old Frondeurs were his allies; but when these fell away, as in time they were sure to do, the Cardinal found himself face to face with all the factions, each one of which, hoping in the end to gain the upper hand, combined for the moment in demanding the liberation of the princes, a cry which he could not resist. Queen Anne, reduced to the pawning of her jewels in order to pay the Swiss troops, and her favourite, put to his last shifts, yet cheery, were overcome; the princes were set at liberty, and after performing that act himself, the minister fled to preserve his freedom, if not to save his head. Yet he was not without friends who escorted him to Rhetel, where Fabert joined him from Sedan, and proved to him that Bouillon, where he wished to sojourn, would be unsafe. Mazarin then went towards Alsace, harassed by the patrols from Stenay. "I travel," he wrote, "rather like a gipsy or a postillion, than like a cardinal who is obliged to carry off his nieces"; and Fabert said that if Turenne had seen him and his equipage, as he drove out of Rhetel, the Marshal would not have put him willingly in a sadder plight. Finally, the Cardinal, frightened by gathering perils, turned back, arrived at Sedan, where he rested for one night, and was escorted the next day to Bouillon by the watchful Governor. Here he could not abide, the Stenay people being on the alert to snap him up. "I should have been a thousand times happier," he wrote, "if the Queen had found it good that I should be arrested." In due time, leaving his nieces in a convent, he found an asylum at Brühl on the Rhine, his host being the Elector of Cologne.

The Parlement of Paris, always prompt to magnify its office, directed two lawyers to inquire into these suspicious proceedings at Sedan, an assertion of authority which was baffled; for Fabert, shutting his gates, told the excluded deputies that

he was not, as they contended, a servant of the Parlement, but of the King. They, he says with some dry humour, rather than not see the town and also go without a dinner, agreed to enter as private persons, mere travellers in short, which they did. Then the Governor fed them handsomely, and saw them into a coach on the road to Mézières !

He was, however, more in danger from the Court than the Parlement. Anne was supposed to desire Sedan for herself, that is for Mazarin, who scouted the report and said he wanted Brisach. But in a document drawn up to buy over Turenne and the Duke his brother, by granting them large territories as compensation for the loss of Sedan, there was actually a clause inserted bringing the Principality under the grasping Parlement of Paris. Against that injustice Fabert grew impassioned. The people of Sedan, he said, accepting his pledged word, had done such faithful service to the King, that if they had not possessed the franchises which were to be taken away, these franchises should have been granted them as a reward. After some delay the destructive clause was qualified as an error which had slipped into the document, and was revoked. It was not the first nor the last time that the Governor had to defend his local institutions and his people from the inroads of greedy Parlements.

Some time in 1651, the patrols of Marshal l'Hôpital, watching Stenay, caught a notable wayfarer near Grandpré, and carried him a prisoner to Sedan. He was a clever agent who had a message from the rebel leaders in Condé's fortress. The Governor, however, would have nothing to say to his prisoner. The gaoler's wife enabled him to write to his Parisian friends, and finally he got a pass from the capital which opened a road to Stenay. The shifty prisoner was the Sieur de Gourville, who has left very amusing memoirs. Born a peasant at La Rochefoucauld, 1625, Jean Hérault by name, his mother taught him to read and write, got him service in

the Rochefoucauld family, his mother wit did the rest and brought him his territorial title. He lived into the next century, old, paralytic, but cheerful. Writing in 1702, he says, "For some years I have felt that my end could not be distant. At the beginning of each, I hope that I may survive to eat strawberries; when they are over I think of the peaches, and that will last as long as it pleases God." He died the next year *before* the peaches were ripe, but he had his fill of strawberries. He won the praises of Boileau, Ninon and Madame de Motteville. The Electress Sophia, when she visited the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, was surprised to see Gourville "seated" in such a presence. He served many masters—the Frondeurs, the Princes, Mazarin, Condé, Fouquet, Louis XIV.—and never betrayed one. He was a man of method, knew and practised finance from top to bottom, and had no scruples, yet constantly did good actions. His inexhaustible resources, his unfailing courage, his fine temper, and his readiness to oblige, made him trusted—at last even by Colbert—and loved. But he had no morals at all, and would bribe, acquire, "convey," and kidnap, if need be; and at the same time give, lend, and spend freely for the benefit of others. A man of real knowledge also—knowledge of the things of his day. He would have made a capital Minister of Finance, for in that post he would not have cheated, and his method and exactness would have saved the public funds and averted robbery. He said himself that Colbert was the only man in France who could have restored the finances in so short a time. Perhaps the lines of Boileau best portray this singular and interesting person—

*Ci git, justement regretté,
Un savant homme, sans science,
Un gentilhomme, sans naissance,
Un très bonhomme, sans bonté.*

We have strayed far; but could not omit to notice, succinctly, a remarkable man who came so near to our subject

as the prison-cells of Sedan. Let us hasten back to the period of his adventure, and digress no more.

Mazarin, in exile, still had the greatest influence in directing the shifting policy of Queen Anne towards the other contending factions, the whole drift of which was to lean this way and that, until they had neutralized or disgusted, or effaced each other, leaving the absolute power of the monarchy as the sole visible authority in the nation. Thus the Queen appointed or dismissed ministers as the aspects of the game varied, seemed to favour the enemies of Mazarin, tried to conciliate Condé, played with the ambition of De Retz, allowed the foolish Gaston to think himself somebody, and, having secured Turenne, waited for the moment when it would be judicious to call back the Cardinal. Condé furnished the opportunity. All the factions professed, and felt, respect for the King, even when acting against him. The Prince of Condé alone openly displayed at least a practical disrespect. He quitted Paris rather than be present at the ceremonial, 7th September, 1650, which signified that Louis XIV., then only thirteen, had attained his majority, and thereby gave the signal for civil war. Well might the President Mathieu Molé, a man whose moderation was equal to his courage, say that for five or six centuries the Princes of the Blood had been the scourges of the people and the enemies of the Monarchy. The Parlement, apparently with the concurrence of the dissembling Queen, still denounced Mazarin, but he knew better than they did how the Regent felt, what she thought and desired. He was already raising an army to strike into the fray, for himself and for the Crown.

From his eyrie on the Meuse, Fabert watched with unflinching interest and sorrow the discord in Paris. He saw at an early period that civil war would be the outcome, and he held the opinion that, if it came, it would not last long. He kept up a continuous correspondence with Mazarin, and both being

Royalists as well as Cardinalists, their coincident judgments frequently anticipated each other. He was, besides, the direct medium of communication between Queen Anne and the Cardinal, and it was through him that, in October, she intimated her desire for the exile's return at the head of an armed force. Fabert heartily entered into the plans of the Mazarinists, which in his mind were identified with plans for the suppression of strife and the restoration of Royal power. His fortress became the centre of the movement, and its Governor the prime agent in levying troops—he would trust none but regulars—in bringing together the Royalist officers, concerting measures with the governors of fortresses, buying horses, providing funds. It is significant of his thorough trust in Fabert that Mazarin authorized him to use at his discretion for these purposes the money he had deposited at Sedan. By the end of the year the task was completed, and Mazarin, at the head of some thousands of soldiers whom he had drawn to his colours on the Meuse, was welcomed by Fabert. He came accompanied by his nieces as usual, and when he set out to join the Court at Poitiers, these ladies were left behind under the care of the Governor's wife. Not yet, however, was Mazarin destined to triumph, for Condé and his noble confederates were strong enough in the field to force on another attempt to compromise. It failed; since the rivals in the contest for power each wished to exclude the others; but the princes, dukes, and their adherents, who naturally took advantage of the popular hatred of the Cardinal, were so far successful that he again thought it expedient to retire. Fabert, who had in vain made a final endeavour to win over Chavigny, received Mazarin once more in Sedan (29th August), and some days afterwards saw him safely lodged in Bouillon. Meanwhile, Turenne and Condé manœuvred and fought around Paris; the Spaniards, weak as they were, recovered much lost ground on the Flemish

frontier, in Italy, and in Catalonia; the Duke of Lorraine joined in the scramble; there were battles, sieges, massacres, negotiations, duels, murders, scarcity, pestilence, and all the bitterest fruits of anarchy. It was not until the end of 1652, when the majority were tired of tumult and bloodshed, that Louis XIV. returned to Paris, and registered the famous declarations which, destroying the political and fiscal pretensions of the Parlement, virtually re-established absolute power, always, however irregularly tempered from time to time, the essence of the French monarchy. Fabert beheld with mournful eyes the miseries wrought by the factions, and longed for the return of order.

It is characteristic of his trustful nature that he refused, at first, to believe the reported intrigues of Condé with the Spaniards; and he was shocked to see a man who possessed such "great qualities" openly join the enemies of his King and country. They did not venture to attack Sedan or any strong place, but they occupied several towns in its neighbourhood, and in Lorraine. During this time Mazarin was in Sedan, where he sojourned many weeks. He was neither dispirited nor unhappy; in fact, he "triumphed secretly in his disgrace," said Fabert, "because it gave him a splendid opportunity of signalizing himself, and of showing that, even beyond the frontier, he could govern with the same authority." The truth is that Queen Anne was devoted to him, and that through her he ruled, whether absent or present. When Turenne compelled Condé to fly from France to his new friends, Mazarin drove out of Sedan, and, after remaining some time with Turenne, hastened to Paris in February 1653. His rivals had disappeared. Chavigny was dead, Condé was in the Spanish camp, and De Retz, whom he had made a cardinal, was a prisoner of state. Four years of revolutionary violence had produced the durable triumph of Mazarin and of absolute monarchy in France.

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER MAZARIN'S TRIUMPH.

THE Governor of Sedan had played a considerable part in this moving drama, neither sparing himself nor his estate to perform what he devoutly believed to be his first duty. His services were handsomely acknowledged, and the minister, privately as well as publicly, showed how accurately he appreciated the character of a man who, he said, if over-sensitive on the point of honour, was "so faithful, so capable, and had so many merits," that his delicate susceptibilities should always be soothed. But he would not pay him, even his bare due, much less give extra reward for generous service. It would be tedious and repulsive to follow in detail the recurring and well-founded complaints of Fabert, and the mean evasions of Mazarin, who did not scruple to insinuate that as the burgher of Metz had a private fortune he could afford to wait. For nine years Fabert received neither pension nor pay, still less the return of monies drawn from his own resources. Mazarin did not always refund the sums he himself borrowed. It was only by dint of remonstrances, sometimes very bitter, not to say disrespectful to the King's minister, that dribblets of cash or paper were obtained or promised. On one occasion he went so far as to affect a belief that Fabert had abandoned a large part of his just claims. "What I most fear," was the ironical retort which

came from Sedan, "is that your eminence will do the like and renounce what is due to you." Mazarin, who must have smiled at the mere suggestion of such disinterestedness on his part, had recourse to his usual remedy, compounded of courteous reproaches and delusive promises. "We cannot satisfy all the world," he used to say, "so we must leave them hope"; and, until shamed into it, he never paid a willing servant who, like Fabert, disdained to play the malcontent. No doubt the Treasury, so inappropriately called "l'Epargne," was usually empty, having no bottom; but some of the money flowing through it might and should have been diverted to repay at least the advances made by the loyal Governor of Sedan. The perpetually recurring differences between the mean and avaricious minister and the faithful State servant commonly ended in one way—a small dole and a request for more devotion. All this time the grasping Cardinal was actually transmitting to Sedan large amounts of what he called his own money for safe custody against a rainy day. Towards the end of 1652, La Vieuville, the Superintendant of Finances, died suddenly, and Mazarin offered the post to Fabert, and allowed the offer to become common talk; but when the minister got back to Paris, he conferred the office upon Servien a diplomatist, and Fouquet an adroit and unscrupulous financier. Probably, on reflection, the Cardinal felt that it would be inconvenient to plant a man of honour and probity in such a position. It was lucky for Fabert that faith was not kept with him, since his principles of strict honesty would have expelled him from the Treasury in a week; yet he keenly suffered from the public "affront," as he thought it. Mazarin answered his rebuke by saying that he was to have a command in the field, and that the functions of a Superintendant were incompatible with the duties of a General. Yet Schomburg and Effiat had occupied the post, and it is not

uncharitable to believe that his disqualification was not his military calling, but his integrity of character.

The command offered to him was the leadership of a field force destined to prevent the Prince of Condé and Duke Charles of Lorraine from establishing their troops in the Bishopric of Liège. The incident is an apt illustration of this troubled time. Duke Charles was the chief of a little army which lived where it could, and the Spanish authorities in Brussels naturally wished that they as well as Condé's followers should eat up some country outside their domains. The Elector of Cologne hardly knew whether it would be less injurious to gratify Spain or please the French, each having the power to ravage his territories, while the Germanic body to which he belonged desired to favour neither, yet keep the district from the marauders and avoid war. Empowered to act on his own judgment during the operations, Fabert marched straight from Sedan, first to the outskirts of Liège and then into Limbourg. But the main aim of all the principals was to evade a violent struggle; and as the Spaniards were not ready to back up their partisans, the quarrel was settled by negotiation, stimulated by the presence of a stout little French army. "Whatever resolution you take in the conduct of your force," wrote the Cardinal, "his Majesty will approve, even should events not accord with your good intentions." One purpose was to lure the Lorraine troops to the French standard; and there was sufficient chance of success to make the Brussels Government arrest Duke Charles and give the command of his bands to his brother. The upshot of this politico-military campaign was an arrangement which freed the bishopric from the marauding bodies who wished to quarter there, and neatly successful, Fabert marched his men back to Sedan. Mazarin was not chary of compliments, the most significant item of praise being that the General had maintained a rigorous

discipline, a novelty in those days, the good effects of which, said his eminence, will be "useful," should the Elector have occasion to seek again "protection" from his Majesty.

Fabert met with a different reception when he applied for the simple repayment of the large sums due to himself and those which he had borrowed to carry out promptly this peaceful campaign. He got no redress. His wife went to Court to plead on his behalf, but she could obtain nothing more than promises and courtesies of all kinds, including a gracious welcome from Queen Anne, which was followed by an unctuous letter from the minister to the noble patriot whom he was so shamelessly defrauding of his due.

Further employment was near at hand—the siege of Stenay. Louis XIV. was crowned at Rheims on the 7th of June, and a week afterwards Fabert, a spectator of the ceremony, was formally directed to command the little army which included the French Guards. Stenay, on the right bank of the Meuse, about twenty-five miles above Sedan, had been granted to Condé in 1648, and formed an ever open gate through which, after his rebellion, his marauding troops entered and plundered Champagne. That gate it was important to close. So soon as he was appointed Fabert invested the place, drew lines of circumvallation, constructed two bridges, one above, the other below, broke up the fords on the Chiers, and kept watch on the hostile garrison in Montmédy. The town was fortified, but the real strength of the fortress was the citadel. The garrison consisted of fifteen hundred Frenchmen and Spaniards, and these were commanded by a French and a Spanish officer. Louis XIV. and Mazarin took up their quarters in Sedan, whence they frequently visited the camp, and thus Fabert carried on his ceaseless labours under their eyes; but they took no active part, and left him free to act as he pleased.

It would be useless to describe the siege of Stenay, which,

except in one important point, was like all other sieges of that time. The exception was this. For the first time, Fabert introduced an innovation—he made his approaches by zigzags, and he connected his two attacks by parallels. An indication of this improvement was seen at the siege of La Capelle, when he used a natural depression as a covered communication between two approaches. That marks his place in the history of military engineering; for he must share with Vauban the credit of improving the art of attack by regular approaches. In his camp and actively engaged was Vauban himself, then a young man in his twenty-second year, brought thither as an assistant by Clerville, the engineer, who carried out Fabert's meditated designs. Vauban, wounded early in the siege, resumed duty before it was ended, and was hit again. So decided a departure from the prevailing usages could not have escaped his keen eyes, and he showed, in after years, how effectively the new method invented by one man of genius could be developed by another still more gifted.

After thirty-two days of open trenches, Stenay capitulated (August 5), honourable terms being granted to the valiant garrison, who were escorted to Montmédy. Fabert, as usual, had been thorough in all things, not less in preparing than in applying the means at his disposal. His incessant activity may be inferred from the language used by Mazarin in a letter to the Queen. Writing on the eve of the surrender he says, "For three days M. de Fabert has not taken an hour's rest, and it is miraculous that he has escaped a wound, since he would not quit the mines and most dangerous spots, despite the orders of the King and our constant prayers which made no impression on him." His frame was enfeebled by many wounds, his condition undermined by disease, but his high spirit and ardent temperament sustained him, and in his fifty-fifth year he was still the forward officer who

faced every peril, endured every fatigue, and saw for himself that the needful work was done.

On the very day following the surrender he sent off the army to reinforce Turenne, who was hard pressed in Picardy. For Condé, by way of counterstroke, had induced the Spaniards to swoop down upon Arras, whereby he hoped to save his cherished stronghold on the Meuse. The project failed, because Turenne, even with a weak army, took up a position near the besiegers which they dared not or did not attack ; waited patiently until succour came from Champagne, and then, breaking through the hostile lines, saved Arras and drove the enemy over the frontier. Gourville, that shifty man of business, whom we have already seen for a moment, a prisoner in Sedan, visited the camp before Arras. On the night of his arrival he supped with the Marquis of Humières, who gave him a Parisian meal served on silver. The next he dined with Turenne. The contrast was striking. The Marshal's table-service was made of tin, and he spread before his guests no "pretty kickshaws," but abundant supplies of butcher's meat, ox-tongues, hams, sausages, and copious floods of wine. The luxury of the Marquis was in advance of his day ; a few years later he had many imitators among the valiant sons of France, who disdained the wholesome simplicity of Turenne.

His labours at Stenay ended, his army transferred to Picardy, Fabert returned to Sedan. Besides his ordinary functions as governor, he found ample political employment during the winter beyond his territorial limits. The escape of De Retz from Nantes increased the apprehensions of Mazarin, who had long doubted the loyalty and distrusted the professions of the governors of Mézières, Charleville and its outworks, called Mount Olympus, which together formed a strong defensive position on the Meuse. Frontier places in doubtful hands were a constant source of anxiety, and the

problem was how to secure these without violence. For that purpose Fabert was actively engaged, and aided by a negotiator sent from Paris, he finally succeeded in planting one of his captains in Mézières, while Louis de la Tremouille, Duke of Noirmoutier, supremely able in the art of trimming, made his peace with the Cardinal, and kept his hold on Charleville—Mount Olympus. That service was only one among many; for we find him distributing troops in winter quarters, enlarging the arsenal of Sedan, building watch-towers along the Meuse, visiting Metz, suppressing a mutiny at Thionville, raising recruits, and, of course, constantly interchanging letters with Mazarin, who continued profuse in praise and promises but niggardly in pay. It was not until 1656 that he succeeded in extracting an instalment with which to purchase an estate at Esternay in Champagne. Mazarin would have preferred to reward him with offers of the Order of the St. Esprit, the *bâton* of a Marshal, the succession to the government of Sedan for his son, future provision for his family—anything but the full reimbursement of what was due. Fabert's main consolation was that he had done his duty, according to his standard, and had kept intact, from the hosts of neighbouring foes, the principality which he governed so well that it was an oasis of prosperity in the midst of misery and ruin. When the Cardinal held out strong hopes of a Marshal's *bâton*, he showed his disinterestedness by pointing out that promotions to that grade, already too numerous, should only be made to fill a death vacancy, a principle not adopted until the reign of Louis Philippe. The death of Schomberg occurred soon afterwards, and then Fabert formally put in his claim. But Mazarin did not fulfil his promise, adroitly alleging that the King could not exalt him alone, an excuse which, considering the touchiness of the French noblesse, who would have fiercely resented the solitary promotion of a plebeian, may be admitted as valid in the

circumstances. There were some things which the absolute sovereigns of France dared not do. The King, even Louis XIV., had to consider the temper, prejudices, and pretensions, especially as regarded the army, of the class of which, after all, he was only the chief. Some nobles, however, did not scruple to send their sons to study war under Fabert, whose method of training, practical and theoretical,¹ was so excellent, that Louis himself described Sedan as the nursery of his good officers. Moreover, the example set forth daily in the life of the General was a "liberal education."

¹ His *Treatise on Military Evolutions*, MS., written not later than 1640, was in existence in the middle of the last century, but cannot now be found.

CHAPTER XVI.

ADMINISTRATOR AND ECONOMIST.

As a civil administrator and a political economist Fabert is entitled to special notice. We have already seen how vigorously and ably he, a young soldier, managed the iron-works at Moyœuvre on the Orne, which he built up from almost nothing, and whence he drew a fortune in a few years, a rare example of capacity for business. We have seen him grappling vigorously and successfully with the dreadful famine which afflicted the Messin in 1638, and observed the broad and solid principles on which he acted. In like manner, by strong and gentle methods, Sedan was conciliated as well as governed, so that, even when he restored the Catholic religion, he retained the good-will of the Huguenots, whose rights he defended to his dying day. Keeping his principality at peace, he organized her population for defence upon a plan, which produced, in miniature, a territorial army, and, just as he favoured voluntary enlistments and punctual payments for the regulars, so he trusted his popular militia with arms, and gave them the advantages of rudimentary training during the summer. The consequence was that the country over which he ruled, for he applied a systematic stimulus to industry and trade, presented a solid block of prosperity on a frontier desolated by a long and cruel war.

The great government of Champagne, which came under his province, was a grievous sufferer. She was not only

plundered repeatedly by the marauding bands, which issued from the neighbouring Spanish garrisons to levy contributions—a barbarous but recognized mode of warfare—she was hardly less pillaged by the hosts of tax-gatherers, and even by the royal troops.

Vexed, as a man of business, at the prevailing disorder, and moved, as he always was, by the misery of the cultivator, Fabert urged the Cardinal to sanction remedies designed as a mitigation of both evils. One considerable scheme was a strict arrangement of winter quarters for the troops. The established practice was to set down the soldiers in the district which had to maintain them, and leave them to themselves. Many officers went home, and as the men were not paid, the country folk had to support them. The troops, of course, refused to starve. They raided on the country, or joined the salt smugglers, or broke into bourgades, and even stormed chateaux. Fabert obtained a royal ordinance and authority to carry it out. In his hands it was not a dead letter. The troops were systematically distributed, so as to be readily available against armed marauding intruders from over the borders. A fixed sum was raised, the whole or part of which was deducted from the taxes, and out of this sum the cost of lodgment—fire, food, shelter—was paid, measures being taken to equalize, as far as possible, the pressure of the detachments upon given areas. The officers and men were forbidden, under severe penalties, to exact more than the law allowed, or to receive gifts. The gain of the plan was that the actual burden upon the population was fixed, and that so stern a disciplinarian as Fabert enforced the regulations, sometimes inflicting severe penalties for disobedience. The plan was successful; the money levied was punctually distributed among the peasants who returned to their fields, and, what was equally noteworthy, the enemy found, on trial, that he could not so easily break through the military posts

and ransom villages and farms. Thus the cultivators, as well as the army itself, were benefited by a system which poured more into the treasury and extorted less from the subject.

Fabert had long meditated on the iniquitous fiscal system—if it deserved the name—which permeated France. He was an habitual student—having two thousand books in four languages on the shelves of his library—and, to back the knowledge which he derived from their pages, he had a large and exceptional experience, not only because he had travelled over and had served in every part of France, and was a close and accurate observer, but because he was always in sympathy with the “dim populations” who were plundered and oppressed. Exact, orderly, and just, he was moved by the waste of the King’s revenue, and the misery of the King’s poor subjects, from whom were extorted many millions more than were transmitted to the royal treasury. There were two kinds of direct taxes, one levied on realty, an impost on lands, no matter whether they were held by nobles or non-nobles; the other on land, capital, labour, everything in fact possessed by the tax-payer, who had no exemption and no privileges. The first prevailed in the *pays d’état*, such, for example, as Brittany, provinces which had preserved their local assemblies; the second was collected in the *pays d’élection*, and assessed in an arbitrary fashion by *les élus*, who were not elected, but who bought the posts they filled, and naturally paid themselves as much as they could screw out of the *roturiers*. Throughout these provinces there was no register of properties, and the assessment went by rule of thumb. In addition, the people had to furnish the *impôts de guerre*—that is, supply the armies on the march and in cantonments in summer, and the troops quartered upon them in winter. These burdens were over and above those which grew out of the salt duties, the tolls on every river, the duties at the town-gates, the tax on every kind of import

at the frontiers, the duties levied on the great internal customs line which, down to 1789, extended from the mouth of the Loire to Lyons, and smote the trader and traveller alike, going and returning, and the special and widely ramified institution known as the Lyons Custom-house, which mulcted all goods passing into France from Italy and Spain, or entering by sea. Not only was the direct personal tax cruelly unjust, the tolls and interior customs foolish as well as barbarous, but the working of the whole complex iniquity was made more iniquitous by the fact that the taxes were farmed, and by the host of persons, roughly estimated at one hundred thousand, who, in various ways, were directly interested in squeezing the people subject to their extortion. It was only because the territory called France was so richly endowed that these multitudinous evils could be borne without destroying the nation. How frightful they were could only be made evident by a minute description of this period, and it has been truly said that, were such a history written in detail, no one would be found to read it.

We have said that, so far as the cost of winter quarters affected the people of Champagne, they were relieved of it by the plan adopted to this extent—it was not levied in addition to the total tax payable. The next step was to root up the practice of extortion, and that it was proposed to accomplish by a rude yet careful survey at once, showing the quantity and quality of land, the nature of the tenure and the cultivation, the number of ploughs, the population, and so on, set forth in a prescribed form, as the basis of a register (*cadaastre*) to be afterwards established for the province. The result of these inquiries was to determine the taxation, and this was to be real and not personal. Fabert prevailed on Mazarin to sanction, for these purposes, the appointment of an officer, M. Téruel, well known to the Governor and to Turenne. The records of Téruel's survey still exist, and the

indefatigable Colonel Bourelly has printed many instructive specimens exhibiting the business-like character of this laborious inquiry. Fabert purposely abstained from appearing in the matter, rightly arguing that the principal authority in Champagne, the Intendant Voisin, who favoured the plan, was the proper person to supervise its execution. Some considerable progress was made, enough to prove how beneficial it would be to the cultivator, and how profitable to the State; but the powerful interests attacked, and the men who had purchased their offices threw obstacles in the path of the reformer; so that, greatly to the chagrin of all concerned in applying the remedy, the evils were but partially lessened, and soon the beneficent work was abandoned. Yet the fact remains that Fabert was an active precursor in the task of fiscal reform, and that his object was a direct tax on real estate based on an accurate register of property. His economic views, in an age when political economy was not invented—unless Monchrestien be considered to have expounded its principles in his *Treatise*—extended over a wider area. He boldly contended that the entire apparatus of inland customs and tolls should be abolished, declaring that trade in the interior should be untrammelled, and that the frontiers were the sole places where duties should be levied—a grand conception for his time. He framed also a scheme of direct taxation, based on the *gabelle*, or salt-tax, which was, in effect, an income-tax, graduated according to the wealth of the subject, an early example of the *impôt progressif*. He proposed that four sources of public revenue only should be retained—the *taille*, reformed and confined to land; the salt-tax, in principle an income-tax; the frontier customs, and the Domain or Crown property. The myriad of tax-gatherers, farmers, financiers, archers, and gendarmes, he would have abolished, insisting that eight hundred men would suffice to collect the whole revenue—except, we

suppose, that portion derived from the customs—these men to be properly paid, and punished if they were extortionate or corrupt. The bishops, he thought—an original idea—should be directed to prepare maps of their dioceses, to take a census of the population, parish by parish, and to draw up a true account of the sums paid in taxes, with the attendant expenses—a series of valuable, but at that date, unattainable statistics.

Finally, he held that, were his scheme adopted, all arrears of taxes should be wiped off, and all State debtors set free. The blot on the design was the exemptions; but in the middle of the seventeenth century we must not look for notions of equity which did not emerge until a much later period. The characteristics of Fabert's suggestion are its breadth, simplicity, and boldness, and, as opinions then went, its fairness. No one need be told that it was not adopted, or that even the commanding genius of Colbert, who, as Mazarin's factotum, knew Fabert and his notions, was unable to sweep away all the prevailing vicious usages. But it is right that the enlightened and honest soldier, who was so far in advance of his time, should have due credit, and occupy his proper place in the social and economic history of France.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARSHAL OF FRANCE.

THE siege of Stenay was the last active military exploit of the Governor of Sedan. "It is believed here that when he has taken Stenay, M. Fabert will be made a Marshal of France," wrote the Princess of Conti, niece of Mazarin, to her husband from Rheims, during the coronation festivities, June 1655. No such promotion followed; yet the language used by the lady represents fairly enough the opinion current in the Court, and probably also the inclination of Queen Anne and her son. Having failed to secure the coveted prize on the breaches of Stenay, Fabert hoped to win it by capturing Montmédy, and was again disappointed; for some powerful influence gave the command of the besiegers to that fiery violent Marshal la Ferté, who, St. Simon says, was, even after he had obtained that exalted rank, frequently beaten in public by his octogenarian father, and did not resent the thrashings he received from this *maître père*, who lived to be nearly ninety.

The arsenal of Sedan supplied the materials for the siege which brought the Court once more to Fabert's castle. Queen Anne and her two sons were lodged in one portion of the building; Mazarin and his nieces in another, so that the city on the Meuse was enlivened by unwonted guests. Louis, young, full of life and strength, abounding in good intentions, eager for knowledge concerning persons and things, sought to

profit by his stay. He visited Stenay, his new possession, and the trenches before Montmédy, a fortress seated on a flat-topped precipitous height above the river Chiers, and surrounded by hills and running waters. Fabert accompanied his youthful master. The frank and experienced veteran, constantly in his company, was a guide and attendant sure to please as well as instruct a royal youth alive to the misery, and animated, at that time, by a genuine passion for the welfare of his people. None could have better described than he did, a few years later, the abuses which had grown up in the realm which he inherited. "There is not," he wrote in the papers intended for his son, "there is not a governor who has not assumed unjust rights, no troops who do not live licentiously, not a *gentilhomme* who does not oppress the peasants, no receiver, no assessor (*élu*), no bailiff (*sergent*) who does not, in his district, exhibit an insolence which is all the more criminal because he uses and abuses the King's authority to support his unjust deeds." The sentence might have been written by Fabert, so well does it express his judgment on a state of things which he strove to remedy, and did largely remedy within the sphere of his authority. It was at this very time that he was engaged in the hard work of repressing evil in Champagne, where, alas! as we have seen, he found the compact array of vested interest much too strong for his limited powers.

The vexed frontier countries, even towards the end of the lingering war with Spain, which raged so many years after the general peace of Westphalia, were beset with perils. After the fall of Montmédy, in the beginning of August, an incident occurred which illustrated the dangers of border highways. Queen Anne had established a hospital at Stenay, and had thoughtfully sent the King's nurse, duly protected, to inspect the arrangements. Returning to Sedan with a sleepy escort, the travellers were waylaid in the woods

between Stenay and Mouzon by some of Condé's soldiers, part of the garrison of Herbenmont, who were out on a foray. The cavalry were in the rear; the two courtier gentlemen in charge of the convoy were asleep; but at the first shots, as became them, they sprang out of their carriages sword in hand, while the trembling women folk helplessly looked on. The noise brought up the horsemen at a gallop, and so fiercely were the robbers handled that all were shot down, or made prisoners of war, and carried to Sedan. Louis XIV. took the insult to heart, and later in the year caused Herbenmont to be captured and razed, so that his nurse was amply avenged. Louis himself ran a serious risk in travelling to la Fère, for Condé's marauders were abroad, eager to snap up such a prize. Fortunately Fabert knew how to counterwork and frustrate plunderers with whose habits he was well acquainted, and the King escaped from the clutches of his cousin. As a rule, the governors of the frontier fortresses appropriated to their own use much of the booty seized, or levied by the troopers, and therefore did nothing to restrain them. It is among Fabert's distinctions that he disclaimed to profit personally from such a source. He credited the product of his reprisals to the state-chest, and guarded his territory so well that he took more than he lost.

German politics attracted the Court to Metz in the autumn of 1657. Ferdinand III. having died, the holy Roman Empire was without a head; a new one had to be found, and the complicated process of selection was not completed until the following year. Mazarin—it could only have been a dream—wished to secure the Crown for his young sovereign, or at least for the Duke of Bavaria. With that object he sent envoys to Frankfort, and the royal sojourn in Metz was intended to support these German schemes; but availed little, for the strong candidate, Leopold, King of Hungary, eldest surviving son of the dead Kaiser, proved eventually too strong

for his rivals. In the Memoirs of Marshal Gramont, Fabert's friend, the Count of Guiche, whom he picked out of the ditch at Saverne, we have a ridiculous picture of this Leopold. The malicious envoy describes him as silently playing *primero* at home, after dinner; or *le noble jeu de quilles* (skittles) in the Spanish ambassador's garden. "He had a very large mouth always open," says the satirical Gascon. "One day during a shower he complained to a favourite that the rain fell into his mouth. The favourite, having meditated some time, advised him to shut it, which he did," adds the mocker, "and found himself much relieved."

While the Cardinal was on the Moselle watching and promoting intrigues beyond the Rhine, he played a part as match-maker. The King's *premier maître-d'hôtel*, Louis of Comminges, Marquis of Vervins, grandson of that headstrong Seigneur of Soboles, who was expelled from Metz by Henry IV., and son of a too notorious Madame de Vervins, was specially befriended by Mazarin, who pushed his fortunes. Taking upon himself the task of finding a wife for the young man, he pitched upon Anne Dieudonnée, Fabert's eldest daughter. Both parties were gratified; the father and mother came from Sedan; the contract was drawn up by Le Tellier, and before a great company in the King's lodgings the document was signed, amongst others, by Louis and Queen Anne. The next day, without pomp or display of any kind, the marriage service was performed in the church of St. Victor, a little to the west of the cathedral. Abraham Fabert and Claude of Clevant were thus honoured in the city which was his birthplace, long her adopted home, and still inseparably connected with his name and glory. How far-reaching the vista, how thronged with shadows of the mighty dead, which led back to the day when, a baby soldier, he marched with his little troop before the victor of Arques and Ivry!

Returning home, the Governor carried with him an edict extending his authority over adjacent territories lately clutched from the Spaniards—Montmédy, Ivry, now Carignan, and Virton being among them—and resumed his active daily toil. At this time, and for many months to come, he was engaged in pushing the administrative and economical reforms described in the preceding chapter; but he never forgot that he was a soldier, never ceased to thirst for the highest prize of his profession, as was natural, seeing that he coveted honour more than pelf or power. Mazarin had often dangled the *bâton* before him, feeding him with hopes which he did not gratify, as if he thought that so noble a man, whose governing motive was dutiful service to his King, and the representative of his King, needed the stimulus of great reward. No doubt the Cardinal had his excuses; the noblesse, who hated him, were tenacious of their privileges, and, despite his power, the Cardinal had to manage the noblesse. The graceful and just thing would have been to have given Fabert his Marshal's *bâton* on the breach of Stenay; had he been a born noble that would have been done; but the potent and pervading influence of a caste stood in the way. The printer's son must await a propitious moment for his elevation; to promote him, alone, would have stirred up a tempest of passion among the monopolists of rank, and Mazarin, so far as he could, always evaded friction. So month after month slid away, and the promise, or strong hint of promise, was not fulfilled until the summer of 1658.

The manner of his promotion illustrates the character of the time. After the surrender of Dunkirk, as a consequence of Turenne's victory over Condé and Don John of Austria, Louis XIV., then at Mardick, made three marshals—Jean de Schulemberg, Comte de Mondejeux, who had defended Arras four years before; Fabert; and Castelnau, mortally wounded

in action. So soon as the order of precedence became known, the sensitive Fabert remonstrated, as well he might, for the honour had really been promised by the Cardinal before, and immediately after the fall of Stenay. And he had another reason. In 1654, when, after the fashion of his class, M. de Mondejeux demanded a *lâton*, the wily Mazarin put him off by saying that the prize had been promised to Fabert. Moreover, the aspirant sent a friend expressly to declare that he willingly placed his claim second to that of the victor of Stenay. Fabert, hurt on the point of honour by the preference shown, put in the dates of his commissions, an unhappy reference, because, although he was a royal captain in 1619, when his noble rival served the Duke of Bouillon, that rival was made a Lieutenant-general six months earlier than Fabert. It is a fact, however, that promotions to the highest rank were not always dated according to seniority of rank, but, as Le Tellier said, according to the good pleasure of the King; and that only made the blow sharper, seeing that the King did not prefer his faithful Governor of Sedan. We may fairly surmise that the King had not the last word, and that Mazarin judged it expedient to avoid an irritating quarrel with the noblesse by giving a *roturier* precedence. Le Tellier, who was said to have been *né sage à l'exercès*, wrote that the King acted as he thought fit, without increasing or diminishing the reputation of the recipients; and that the Cardinal did not base his esteem for Fabert upon the date of his promotion to the rank of Marshal, which was doubtless true. He was only half consoled by the compliments. Nevertheless, though what we should call obsequious in his language, he buried his grievance with a frank and sincere expression of devotion to the Throne, as represented by the minister, which was an abiding principle with one who had the courage to be a "Cardinalist" in 1642. Andilly says that none was bold enough to assert that he rose by favour

more than justice. His many friends rejoiced in his honour; deputations, even from neighbouring provinces, came to Sedan; and one from Metz, most welcome of all, had the eloquent young Bossuet for spokesman. It was the first grant of the dignity of Marshal to any one who had not been born a gentleman, and who had begun his long and faithful service in the ranks. The promotion of Fabert is a landmark in French history.

The next year brought peace on its wings to the kingdom; nowhere was the blessing more welcome than it was in the desolated frontier lands, which, for nearly a quarter of a century, had been the prey of friend and foe. Spain and France were alike wearied; Condé, who had lost much that was substantial and had gained little glory, was afflicted with home sickness sharpened by failure; Mazarin, feeling that it was time to sheath the wasteful sword, and marry the young King, if possible, to an Infanta, entered on those famous negotiations which ended in the Peace of the Pyrenees. Fabert had some slight share in the pacification, for he not only facilitated the return of Condé, who had so profound a trust in his integrity, he also suggested an article in the treaty itself which gave to France the line of the Chiers and the district of Charny, still a point of passage on the Meuse. The fact is that, having occupied Ivry and Champ-neuville, the sharp-eyed border warden framed, and Mazarin adopted, a form of words which, though not without some dispute, finally secured these places to France. Ivry, given to the Savoyard Count of Soissons and his wife Olympia Mancini, the parents of Prince Eugene, became Carignan, a name conspicuous in the annals of Piedmont. It certainly was by the foresight and deftness of Fabert that the eastern frontier of France was so materially strengthened. He wished to add the fertile district of Ivry to Sedan, arguing that it was wrong to "bestow on persons what should belong

to places," that is fortresses; and, with his wonted disinterestedness where the public service was concerned, he vainly offered, provided it were done, to quit his government of Sedan, either to serve elsewhere or retire altogether. Yet all this time his neighbour, the brave, witty, and disreputable M. de Vandy, Governor of Montmédy, was foolishly insinuating that Fabert was disloyal; foolishly, because he could never have made Louis or Mazarin believe a charge which, utterly baseless as it was, vexed the too sensitive soldier.

St. Evremond, then a middle-aged officer and practised pamphleteer, wrote a letter on the Peace of the Pyrenees which has echoed through the centuries, not because it is a just criticism upon the actual Treaty, but because, as a composition, it is a splendid example of trenchant irony and ingenious rhetoric. For two years, passing from hand to hand, it was still a secret from the Government and the public, until, found in Fouquet's casket of papers, the mere wind of its discovery sent the accomplished author flying to London, where more than half a century afterwards he ended his days. St. Evremond sent a copy of his stinging onslaught on the Cardinal to Fabert, and it was found among his papers by the Père Barre. Colonel Bourelly, who read it in the library of St. Geneviève, says the manuscript terminated with four epigrammatic lines which the worthy soldier believes had not theretofore been published. He prints them thus—

*On a grand tort de s'étonner
Que cette paix ne soit pas bonne ;
C'est Dieu qui doit la donner,
Et c'est le diable qui la donne.*

Fabert must have enjoyed the keenness and vivacity of the letter, but he could have had no kind of sympathy with its spirit or intent. He had seen too much of wasteful war not to feel, as he did feel, a longing for a restful and fruitful

peace, which should relieve the poor cultivators from the ravages of armies as well as marauders.

We have seen that the grand scheme designed to benefit the Champenois was frustrated, much to the vexation of its authors, and that practically, except in his own territory, the work-days of the ceaseless reformer were over. He was now often unwell, for wounds and labour and years told on his strong constitution. Louis XIV. obtained a Spanish bride as a consequence of the treaty of peace. Fabert, who visited Paris in the summer to congratulate the royal bridegroom, fell seriously ill, and was scarcely relieved of his sickness in time to take a part in the grand ceremonial entry of the bride. The illness proved the solicitude of Louis and his mother, who sent their doctors to tend the patient, and the sincerity of old friends, like Turenne, Condé, and Le Tellier, who saw him on his sick-bed. He recovered in time to figure in the splendid entry of the Infanta, and the marriage procession from the Faubourg St. Antoine to Notre Dame. The zeal of the new Marshal had one remarkable result. He held that the Marshals, as a kind of military household, were entitled to precede the Ambassadors. The pretension suited the political temper of the young Sovereign, who readily enforced it; but the Ambassadors, indignant at the slight put on their masters, protested, and absented themselves altogether from the splendid parade in the streets and the solemn service in Notre Dame. It was an indication of the spirit of the new reign.

Returning to Sedan in September, he resumed his daily toil; riding with a light escort through the territories, and visiting the places recovered from Spain or Condé; engaging skilled artizans to replenish the exhausted military stores in the arsenal; employing others upon the fortifications, setting on foot textile and other manufactures by means of loans advanced without interest, but on strict conditions as regarded

the payment of wages and continuity of employment. He had also never-ending anxieties growing out of the two religious parties in his State which he fervently desired to make one.

In the midst of these labours came a great misfortune. Madame de Fabert, who had been left in Paris, died in February 1661. Her husband himself had been obliged during the late autumn to seek relief from his pains in the waters of Bourbonne. He came back no better in health, and the illness of his wife sent him almost instantly to Paris, where he found he was dying. Madame de Fabert was a good woman, benevolent, discreet, courageous. To her Sedan owed its lace industry, for she personally taught the women *Point de Sedan*, a modification of *Point de Venise*; a year after her death the workers were organized, and at the close of the century were numbered by thousands. Madame de Fabert shared all her husband's civil toils, and gave him, it would seem, only one cause for vexation. She loved gaming, chiefly because it was the fashion, as so many women then did; but yielding to his wishes, she restrained her inclinations—at least in the country, though she probably still played when at Court in Paris, where play was epidemic. None was more beloved in Sedan than the Maréchale, who had made her home there for nearly twenty years. Fabert's grief was poignant and profound, but he did not parade a sorrow which his religious nature taught him should be borne without complaint. "I cannot ask consolation from God," he wrote to a friend, "but only that He will give me the grace to turn to my salvation the pains with which He afflicts me." He carried home to Sedan her remains, and they were buried in a vault under the altar of the Church of the Capucins, where his also, a year later, were destined to lie, until the brutal Jacobins in '93 plucked them out and flung them to the winds and waters!

A month later the news of another death reached Sedan. Mazarin for some months had been grievously ill. He was residing in Vincennes when the Maréchale lay on her death-bed, and the Court went thither to be near him—Anne from old affection, Louis with mixed feelings, both from motives of respect for a masterful servant. “The last time that I had the honour to see him,” writes Gourville in his *Memoirs*, “was by chance, five or six days before he died. As he was passing under the pines in the wood of Vincennes, to take the air, I saw him alone with the lieutenant of his guards who followed his chair. I wished to avoid him, but he saw and called to me, stopped his bearers, and amused himself for a moment by talking to me. He said he believed that he was at the end of his days, whereat I was deeply moved.” A strangely suggestive meeting. Gourville had been an active agent of the *Frondeurs* and of the princes; had been and still was a prime instrument of Fouquet in his secret contest with the shrewd and ambitious Colbert, who was only six years older than Gourville; so that many memories must have surged up in the mind of the dying Cardinal when, moved by a common sympathy, he stopped under the pines to chat with a clever money-maker, or rather money-gainer, a man after his own heart, yet without his vices—meanness and avarice. And Gourville may well have been moved, for who could tell what might befall after death had deprived the whole band of public robbers of their chief protector and patron?

Though sometimes hard hit by his plain language, and a little irritated by a sensitiveness on the point of honour which the Cardinal, himself exempt from such weakness, could not well understand, Mazarin always trusted the honest Governor of Sedan, whom he found “so capable, so faithful.” Treasure, ever since the days of the Fronde, was deposited in the safeguard of Fabert, and when the Cardinal died, there

still remained a million in specie, which was promptly handed over to Colbert. It was only a fraction of the immense wealth scraped together by Mazarin, who, said Fabert, "had much more than he needed during his life; his riches did him no service; and the reckoning after death perhaps is rude. Would that God had been pleased to let him leave but little!" The thoughts of the lonely veteran in his castle on the Meuse were sombre and pathetic. Arnauld Andilly had written to him words of sympathy on the death of the Maréchale. In answer the Governor said that his spirit [*esprit*] could not be more submissive than it was, but that the body was not under the dominion of the will. His pains, physical and mental, were great, for he went on, "I ask from God neither consolation, nor that He should end my anguish; I desire to bear it as long as it pleases Him, and even that He should increase it, if that would help to lessen the torment which, perhaps, is endured by the person whom I have lost. . . . The courtiers will attribute to weakness of mind that affliction which my heart holds fast; I believe that it proceeds from a tender nature which could bind itself up with that of another." He saw no remedy for what he called his body, his earthly tenement as opposed to his *esprit*, and asked pardon for speaking of weaknesses which he should have hidden, but he touchingly said, "I was forced to open my heart as soon as I began to speak to you"—an old friend whom he had known for a quarter of a century in war and peace. "My misery should excite your pity, as it makes me know that I am good for nothing." So he felt, yet openly he never stayed his labours, as became one who in youth had lived for "glory," in his prime and declining years to obey higher moral dictates whether they might bring their own reward or bring none.

The death of Mazarin was the signal for a political revolution as thorough as it was unexpected. The King had

reigned since 1643; he was now to govern. Louis had determined to be his own First Minister, and to put his resolve into act as soon as the Cardinal ceased to be. The courtiers could not be readily brought to believe that the young man who had so patiently waited for the fulness of his inheritance would suddenly, once and for all, become a Master, who held firmly by the pregnant phrase—*l'état c'est moi*—a dogma which probably he never uttered in that concrete shape. Eager friends, relatives, and idle gossips whispered to the solitary veteran in Sedan, first that he was to be Mazarin's successor, next that he was to have the high post of Superintendent of the Finances. But although the King, and still more his mother, apparently had some wish to seat him among the principal ministers, his Majesty had no notion whatever of making him First Minister or chief of the Treasury. The mere report troubled his peace and filled him with anxiety. He had no love of the Court at any time. "All my life," he wrote, "I have stood in dread of the Court," where persons, he found, were condemned on the strength of appearances, so artfully arranged as to deceive almost the accused themselves. Moreover, experience had taught him, that his frank temper unfitted him for the life of a courtier. "An open character like mine," he wrote, "supplies too many arms against itself." So he stood out against his friends, whose counsels were not wholly disinterested. "I have no intention of quitting Sedan to reside at the Court," he said firmly, "and I do not believe any one could make me change my mind." Yet had his King commanded he would certainly have obeyed, although obedience, as he said, would lead to his speedy death. And he was perfectly sincere.

The alarm died away, but another speedily arose of a more serious kind. Colbert, who having lived behind the scenes with Mazarin, knew intimately the profound corruption which ran through the entire Finance Department, had become the

confidential agent of the King, and he relentlessly exposed the accounts and laid bare the practices of Fouquet, the Superintendent. Colbert, a great constructive as well as administrative genius, thirsted for power, was indeed "more ambitious than he knew"; but he also loved order, and detested the roguery which custom had domiciled in the French financial offices. Fouquet, like Mazarin, had filched for himself, and both had been the centre of a host of money-lenders and jobbers, who thrived on loans, advances, farmed revenues, contracts, and even had contrived, in one case, so bold were they, to secure the repayment of a large loan which was altogether fictitious—a mere entry in a book! With Colbert on his track, Fouquet was a lost man, since the King had other grounds for anger; and thus Fouquet, arrested at Nantes, had what was called a trial, and ended his days a prisoner in Pignerol. Now it chanced that when his papers were seized at St. Mande, a document was found which bore upon Fabert. He was named in it as one of several Governors who were pledged to take up arms on behalf of Fouquet, should that worthy be arrested. The mere idea that Fabert could betray his Sovereign was preposterous; but he writhed under it, and quitting his country house in the village of Barricourt, he hastened to Court, where Le Tellier told him that the accusation "was certainly written on paper, but that no one believed it." And so it proved: for when the troubled Marshal saw the King, Louis spontaneously cried out, "Fear nothing; Fouquet's disgrace does not affect you at all"; and Queen Anne said promptly, "I will be your bail, if you should want one." Soon after Fabert took leave of the King, who repeated his former language, and added, "I shall be vexed should I learn that the mad writings of Fouquet give you the least chagrin."

Quitting Fontainebleau, and picking up his family at Barricourt, he returned to Sedan, and there soon received a

further proof of the esteem in which he was held. The birth of a Dauphin in November 1661 was celebrated by an addition to the roll of Knights of the St. Esprit, and the Marshal was included among those who were to be decorated with the coveted *Cordon Bleu*. It was not the first time that the great distinction had been offered to him. Mazarin asked him to accept the collar in 1653, but Fabert pointed out that, being only the first gentleman of his race, he could not satisfy the requirements of the statutes, and therefore would be excluded even if nominated. The well-meant effort of Louis to honour the Marshal met with a similar fate. A man was required to have three ancestors who were gentlemen by name and arms, and to furnish adequate proofs of his descent, in order to merit this dignity. Fabert had them not, and he would not forge a genealogy. The Count of Noailles delicately expounded the nature of the difficulty to the King, who said that such was his regard for the Marshal, that he would accept, without examination, any proofs handed in. The concession was of no avail. He would not condescend to trickery. Willingly would he accept the Order, but it must be unstained by baseness. "Never," he said, "will I permit my mantle to be honoured with a cross, and my soul, at the same time, dishonoured by an imposture." Examples in that line were paraded before him. These "could not," he said, "set aside the laws of probity. There is but one justice, one truth, one reason, and those whom they condemn are rightly condemned, even should they be absolved by all the politicians." To cut the contest short, he wrote a manly letter to the King declining the Order, saying that to obtain it he must "become a forger"—a forger to his King, the mere thought of which he abhorred. He did not ask that the rigid statutes should be relaxed on his behalf, but the drift of language implied a hope that his services might have obtained him that favour. It could not

be. Louis, who would not, perhaps dared not, suspend the statutes in his case, tried to make amends by exalting the act of refusal in characteristic words which the Père Barre copied from the original—

“MY COUSIN, I cannot tell you whether it is with more esteem than sorrow that I have seen from your letter on the 7th of this month how you exclude yourself from the *Cordon Bleu*, with which I had resolved to honour you. This rare example of probity appears to me so admirable that I confess that I regard it as an ornament of my reign. But I regret extremely to see a man who, by his valour (*valeur*) and fidelity has attained so worthily to the first offices of my kingdom and crown, deprive himself of this new mark of honour by an obstacle which binds my hands. Not being able to do more in order to render justice to your virtue, I assure you that never would a dispensation have been granted with greater joy than that which I should have spontaneously sent you, could I have done so without overturning the foundations of my Orders; and that those on whom I am about to confer the Order, will never receive from it greater lustre in the world, than the refusal, which you have based on so generous a principle, will confer on you in my eyes. For the rest I pray God, that he may have you in his Holy and worthy keeping. Written at Paris, 29th December, 1661. LOUIS.”

This letter is an honour both to the young monarch who wrote and the honest veteran who received it. The courtier world was divided in opinion on the quality of Fabert's action, but it was only ascribed to degrading motives by the baser sort; and after the King's letter there was more risk of loss than profit in open detraction. Their shabby censures did not weigh upon the Marshal, but he still fretted indigantly under the malicious gossip which took Fouquet's astonishing memorandum for a text. The Bishop of Rodez, formerly the King's tutor, warmly, as his wont was, undertook

the defence of his friend. "You know me badly," said Louis, "if you think I am credulous enough to put any faith in these rumours, the authors of which I would punish if I knew them." Then grew up fresh stories. Fouquet had said in prison, that if the King would let him be at large he was certain that Fabert would be his bail." Thereupon the town began to talk. The Marshal was angered by these calumnies. He even requested that he should be imprisoned in the Bastille until his innocence was proved—a request not listened to. In vain Le Tellier begged him not to worry himself. His irritation and also his courage may be inferred from what he said and wrote. "I should be a criminal if, observing any malversation or disloyalty in Fouquet, I had failed to inform the King. And if, to-day, I condemn his administration of the finances, may I not, in conscience, solace him in his misfortune without failing in respect or fidelity to the King?" The depth of Fouquet's misdeeds was known only to a few, hardly at all to the Marshal, who was not the man to desert a friend in distress; and he was by no means the only one who did not swim with the stream.

Throughout the summer of '61 he had to maintain as best he could the interests of Sedan. The King had given his sanction to an edict abolishing the sovereign council, and substituting a presidial court dependent on the Parlement of Metz. The change threatened the status of the Protestants, who shared in the government, and injured the Governor, who forthwith took steps to defend his people. He remonstrated so strongly that the Court offered a compromise—a larger jurisdiction, the paid post of Grand Seneschal for himself, and honorary advantages for his male descendants. He saw then, that the superior power was in earnest, and tried to make the best bargain he could, by declining the proffers of place and pelf, on condition that he should nominate to the new offices. The proposal was accepted, but clogged with

the restriction that the offices, as usual, should be bought from the State. Against this Fabert made a stand, and when the money-lenders offered to advance the sums required, he gave the project a fatal blow by saying that he would pay, out of his own purse, what was in reality a fine, qualified by the power to sell, inflicted on the persons he might select. That stroke of personal disinterestedness brought the King to his side ; and the State demand was abandoned. We may finish the story here by adding that an attempt, made by the Metz Parlement in the following spring, to meddle with appointments in Sedan, was sharply repelled by the Governor and Council, who were sustained by the King. Thus to the day of his death Fabert kept faith with the Sedan Calvinists, protected them from persecution, and upheld them in office. When he was dead, their adversaries gained the upper hand. With him the reign of toleration expired.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE END.

THE contest with the grasping lawyers of Metz was the last labour of the wearied Governor, except one. Ever since he came to Sedan he had shown a solicitude to deal fairly with the Protestants, which, good policy as mere policy, harmonized with his sense of what was right. It was a perception of his equity, a knowledge of his firmness, which made Richelieu select and Mazarin uphold him. The great Cardinal at least believed in his Church; the less great Cardinal, who was not a priest, seemed, as Madame de Motteville said, indifferent alike to vice and virtue. Mazarin was not a persecutor, and the conciliatory conduct observed in Sedan suited his political views. But the Governor had a finer moral sense. While he restored liberty of worship to the Roman Catholic Church, as in duty bound, he did not permit anything approaching to ascendancy; and to the last he cherished a hope that the religious rupture might be healed by just and gentle means. The sterner Calvinists, who had found refuge in Sedan, unable to endure the loss of pre-eminence, shook the dust from their feet and wandered into foreign lands; the greater number, less rigid, remained, and the justice of Fabert won their hearts. His early association with Vincent de Paul, his comradeship with Arnauld Andilly, the hearty welcome he gave to the famous *Letters of Pascal*, letters which he read, as they came out, with a youthful enthusiasm and fine appreciation of their form as well as

their spirit, does not prepare one for that leaning towards the Jesuit Fathers which he subsequently showed. But the truth seems to be that he grew bewildered with the clash of opposing theologians, and took refuge in authority. The violence, the want of charity and fairness on all sides disgusted him, and made him say, "the more one reasons, the less one persuades and the more one raises doubts." So he cut the knots which neither he nor the disputants could untie. "I correct, by faith," he said, "the weakness of my sense and reason. Amid the clash of dogmas, I hold to that which has been believed by all, everywhere, and always." If the Jesuits in the end triumphed so far as to gain his good-will and to educate his children, it was perhaps because singularly discreet and diplomatic specimens were sent to Sedan. Do what they might, they never made or tried to make him a persecutor, but rather fell in with his maxims of conduct, and even supported at Court his liberal system of dealing with the Protestants. To him, of course, it was a matter of simple honesty and the keeping of promises, and in that old-fashioned faith he lived and died. He could not be got to think that the suppression and punishment of "heresy" was the chief duty of man. After peace was made in 1659, he wished to lead an army against the Turk. Thereupon the sage of Port Royal suggested heretical England as a foe; and Fabert answered that his King was an ally of England, and that if he were not, the devouring Turks, "the enemies of Jesus Christ," were far more to be feared than "heresies" which have existed in every age. "I do not fear the heretics," he added, "so much as the infidels." His steadfast belief that those who had quitted the Roman Church would, if she thought more of spiritual and less of earthly things, slide back into her arms was childlike in its simplicity, though somewhat justified after his death by so many conversions which were not all at the point of the sword.

These friendly contests with the *grand solitaire* of Port Royal, who had himself a keen eye to place and power, as became a man of uncommon ability, occurred in 1659, a period when the Marshal was at the height of his fortune. Yet at that moment when Andilly was urging him to put off his extreme modesty and strive for political power, he drew a picture of himself which shows plainly enough how great was the distaste for the world which had come upon him. He desired to retire from all affairs, but duty to his family compelled him to lead a life for which he had no liking. "For sixty years," he wrote, "I have been in this world. I have risen step by step to the point attained. God has given me wealth I know not how. I have almost no birth, no relatives of consideration. I, alone, have made my fortune. Neither my wounds nor any disease give me any inconvenience [so lightly he treated his bodily pain]. I have no enemies, no *mauvaise affaire*, nor in my household anything which gives me pain. How many men in France would think themselves happy were they as I am ! Yet, how often do I think every day of the happiness I should enjoy, could I spend the short time left me remote from business which must be done for others as well as for myself." It was all true ; the glittering prizes won brought him little satisfaction ; but the real source of his grief was that no effort availed to achieve any serious diminution of the grievous social evils around him. Posts were sought because they conferred honour, and power because it commanded fear. He held that a man, entrusted with an office, was bound to perform the duties pertaining thereto, and that the King's delegated authority should never be used to secure personal gain. That was not the common practice whatever was the formal belief, and hence the abuses which were so glaring and so inexpugnable. The sight thereof filled him with melancholy, perhaps despair, at times ; and made him hunger for the peace which the wearied always

hope to find in seclusion. Later, as we have seen, private afflictions fell upon him, death smote and pain racked him; but still he stood fast by the plain duty which was nearest, and continued faithful to the end. That was his characteristic.

His love of knowledge led him at one time to look closely at the poor chemistry of the day, and even to dabble in astrology; he found nothing in either except amusement. The ignorant or malicious accused him of confabulations with the devil, to whom of course he had sold his soul; and the Père Barre, who imputes to him a belief that he should not survive his sixty-third year, hints that he got it from a horoscope drawn by a certain Montluisant, an astrologer and an alchemist as well, who was an experimental chemist. But after trial had, Fabert dismissed both the "sciences" in a tone which shows that they did not impose on his strong sense. He speaks in one letter rather contemptuously of the "jargon" of his chemist, and adds that the science is not a bit more certain than that of astrology, "the decrees of which, thank God, are not immutable." Not at all the language of a convert. "Beyond the pleasure of seeing, in a sort of way, the composition of bodies, I do not believe anything can be got out of this kind of work."¹ The accusations of sorcery and intimacy with Satan were so silly that he only alludes to them in one place with a fine tone of disdain. Yet the calumny stuck to his memory in Champagne, where the villagers of Esternay, his estate, averred that every night his ghost was seen walking in the hall of the château and on the roads beside the lake. The superstition was operative during the Revolution, when the shade of Fabert saved his former abode from destruction.

Whether the story of his presentiment is true or not,

¹ Those who may be curious about the jargon can gratify their curiosity by reading the specimens which the indefatigable Bourelly has dug up out of the French archives.

certain it is that he died in his sixty-third year. The spring found him deeply engaged in a vigorous effort to bring the Calvinists back into the fold. It was his main purpose, but of course did not draw him away from those worldly duties which he always largely interpreted and zealously performed. He had soon perforce to stay his active hand, for on the evening of May 10th a violent outbreak of fever obliged him to take to his bed. Day by day he grew worse, and feeling that death was on him, on the fifth day of his mortal sickness he demanded and received the Sacrament in the most solemn form; took farewell of his servants, embracing and blessing them as he lay on his bed; and talking calmly to his friends and his youngest daughter, the sole member of his family present at the moving scene. At night, he said to the President Morel, "in two days, if it please God, I shall know much about the things concerning which we have so often conversed"; and early the next morning, having implored the President to press on the work of reconciling the Protestants, and finding him disinclined, and full of grave doubts respecting its success, the old ardour burned up afresh in the Marshal's breast, with striking results. "Well, then," exclaimed the dying man, "summon hither the best among them, and in bidding them farewell, I will talk to them in your presence." He was obeyed. The Huguenots came readily, for they loved the man. The curtains at the foot of the bed were drawn back, revealing the pathetic figure of the Marshal, who, by a strong effort of will, strove against and overcame a bodily weakness so severe that it often restricted his breathing. Yellow with bilious fever, emaciated, almost fainting at times, he reclined there, all about him feebleness except his bright eye and firm voice. So he made good his purpose, valiant as if in battle, and spoke to these friends and companions of many years with a simplicity and earnestness which reached their hearts. A most singular death-bed

scene, affecting, impressive, and well worthy of remembrance, not more for the action of the man than for the words which he spoke from the very brink of the grave. Both act and words are in full accord with the noble character which we have seen severely tried and proved by the stern tests of a convulsed and sanguinary age. When the heat oppressed and the exertion and fervour of speaking made him feel faint, he took off his cap and caused a window to be opened. Read straight through there seems no halt in the flow of his touching appeal; yet it was broken here and there, and his struggles with his malady for breath, distressed the cluster of his friends and fellow-workers. Much that he said is now dead and gone, but much remains alive and pertinent to all time, and some of that we may give.

No time was wasted in compliments. "To you," he said simply, "I am indebted for some good advice, and you will do me the justice to confess that I have lived with you as brothers." Then he went directly to the solemn matter in hand.

"If anything could now make me regret to die it would be to leave imperfect the work of religious re-union, towards the accomplishment of which God inspired me to labour twenty years ago, from the very moment when the late King honoured me with this government; since which time I have been constantly bent on it; and at length there seemed to me, on both sides, a disposition favourable to the success of this pious design. I tell you frankly that, on many occasions, I have not found much help could be had from the doctors of the one party more than those of the other. Each one sought to support his side and fight the adversary. If a book be read, the Protestants fasten on whatever goes to support their opinions; the same thing is done by the Catholics. Why? Because neither is animated by that spirit of charity which tends to concord; neither will take any steps towards recon-

ciliation. I expected aid of that kind, and trusted that I should be seconded in this charitable design by persons who, although not doctors in theology, are not wanting in ability or repute, and I will not despair of obtaining it."

Then, reviving old experiences, he became autobiographical to show how great a change had come over his own mind.

"I know well," he said, "that a man born, bred, and instructed in Protestant beliefs does not readily change or modify them in order to join the Catholic Church. If that is the case with private persons, how much more so with those who have passed through the hands of the doctors; the more the knowledge, the greater the resistance. But, gentlemen, let us do something for the glory of God and the peace of our families. We do not differ so much in our beliefs as some would make out. Before I had a full knowledge of yours, I was taught that you were disloyal persons, men without fear of God, without law or faith, the enemies of the King and the State. I was nourished, and quitted the care of a mother who had bred and confirmed me, in these opinions concerning you and your religion. Whenever in that time a chance offered of injuring those who held your faith, I wrought with ardour against foes whom I regarded as enemies of God and the King. I have been engaged in the siege of places held by the Huguenots (so they were called), and have been often wounded; judge, gentlemen, if in that state and prejudice I could love you.

"The late King having honoured me with this government, and engaged me to live with you, I was determined to bottom the matter, and learn whether what had been said of you was true or not. I obtained the needed instruction and a knowledge of your faith, not by the method of disputation which only produces ill effects, exasperates the mind, and feeds hatred, but by the conversation and familiar talk which I have had with you. In the end I found that we were agreed with

regard to the principal points which make the essence of religion, that you believe as I believe, that I believe as you do. You are all witnesses that after our familiar interviews, after having laid bare and explained to you my opinions on the fundamentals of religion, and you having made me comprehend yours, you have said openly that you would sign all the points of my belief as I had set them before you ; and I also said that I would subscribe my name to yours as you had explained them to me. Eh, gentlemen, what more can be needed to bring you back to us ? . . . Remove all bitterness, consider calmly the things which are practised in both religions, but let the considerations be charitable, having for their main end the removal of the obstacles which separate us. Distinguish between things essential to religion and articles of faith which none can doubt without heresy, and those which are accidental and indifferent. If we agree on the first, the second should not keep us apart. Much rubbish has been spoken and printed by some monks, reject it ; but your ministers must also act with good faith, and exert themselves to remove the impressions conveyed to the people respecting many things which are never done in our religion."

And so he continued, varying the same theme and almost the same argument, which he reinforced by touching appeals to their higher worldly interests, the tranquillity of the realm, the peace of families, the fair and worthy attainment and enjoyment of public offices—and reminded them, as he had a full right to do, that he had this very year risked his fortune rather than abandon them. And he implored them to grant his prayer, "by the affection," he said, "which I have for you, and which I owe you as friends who, as I have always declared, have laboured with me in the service of the King and the State with a fidelity absolute and complete. . . . In the name of God consider well what I say."

Among the men so simply and earnestly addressed were

some who wept, and certainly others who controlled their emotion. Several, by their language of hope, filled the Marshal with gladness; only one chilled his warm feelings by saying that he would do all permitted by his conscience. This was stout Colonel Banda, a hardy veteran and steadfast Huguenot of the 'Thirty Years' War, once, in a time of peril, recommended to Mazarin by Fabert himself, as "very experienced, courageous, and skilful in war." He could not take the broad, benevolent view of his old commander, but clung to the faith for which he had so often fought beside Condé and Turenne. But when the moment of parting came, and the sick Marshal, suffering from his exertion, bade them farewell, Banda, like the rest, knelt beside the bed and kissed the hand of the dying chief, who laid both hands upon the head of each and besought him to perform his duty in the service of the King. "We all wept like children," says one witness of this scene whose narrative has been preserved.

During the day Fabert was employed in anxious thoughts for the future of his family, desiring M. Voisin, to whom he dictated a letter, and M. de Termes, his trusted man of business, who had hurried from Paris, to watch over the welfare and act as the guardians of his children. "I make you, sir," he said to De Termes, "the father of my children. It is true that the charge will give you trouble; but why have I loved you, and why have you loved me?" It was night, and the Marshal had need of rest; yet the next morning he actually rose from his bed, and was found arranging papers in his study, so strong was the habit of ceaseless industry. But he grew worse as the hours went by, and after recovering from a violent spasm, begged to be left alone. In the afternoon, De Rivière, his surgeon, peering between the closed curtains where all was still, called to him, and receiving no reply, touched his breast and found that he was dead. He had glided peacefully away, and near his corpse lay his Book of

Hours, open at the Psalm *Misereere mei Deus*. He died about five o'clock on May 17, 1662, "died as he had lived," wrote Bourlement, Governor of Steuay, who saw him alive and thought that he had recovered on the very midday of his death; died "with the greatest firmness, and without any apprehension of death which he felt assured was near at hand."

His body, enclosed in lead, was buried, as he willed it should be, without any pomp in the crypt under the choir of the Church of the Irish Capucins, beside that of Claude de Clevant. The black marble of their tomb still remains visible, but the church is now a military hospital; and the ashes of the noble dead, torn from their resting-place in '93, have long ago been swallowed up in the ditch of one of the horn-works built by the patriotic Marshal. Of their two sons, one, the eldest, fell in Candia fighting the Turks; the other died in his bed still a youth. Their three daughters were married—Anne to the Marquis of Vervins, and after his early death, to François de Mérode, Marquis de Trelon; Claude to Charles Henry Marquis de Caylus; and Angelique first to a Marquis de Genlis, and next to a d'Harcourt, Marquis de Beuvron. It was, however, the posterity of François de Fabert, the marshal's elder brother, which has survived in direct descent to our own day.

Abraham Fabert, says the Père Barre, was of middle height, well made, having a bold and easy carriage. His complexion inclined to the brunette, flushed with red; his forehead was high and broad, his eyes bright and piercing; and he moved with head erect, and gave the impression of a stern earnest man. We have seen that, in youth and manhood, he was bold, resolute, and brief in speech, that he had no polish and paid little attention to the outward forms of politeness; but was still loved and trusted by great and small, because he was sterling metal, really generous, and always a man of his

word. He was a great worker all his life, in camp, battle, and quarters, especially studious and painstaking in all that concerned his profession, upon which he placed a large interpretation—holding, for example, that geography was as necessary to an officer as arms were to a soldier. He wrote much, but burned most of his compositions, especially those concerning his own time, saying that the events and incidents had been so altered and disguised, that the common notions of them were almost the opposite of what they were as he knew them. Fearing lest his children, in order to defend his good name, should be involved to their detriment in painful controversies, he destroyed contributions to history which would have been most valuable. Literary renown evidently had no attraction for him. He was proud, a little exacting, and sensitive to excess; but he had no vanity. When he was called to the chief post in Sedan his great qualities had fair scope, and came more visibly into play. He governed as well as reigned in his little realm, where he was a terror to evil-doers; yet he drew a distinction between one sort of delinquent and another, tempering his severity with mercy, wherever he could without injustice. As a soldier he paid his way throughout all his campaigns; as a governor he insisted on honesty and order. Yet, dismissing a valet who had robbed him, he gave him money wherewith to start afresh in life; and when another servant lost, in gambling, a sum entrusted to him, the offender was provided with the means of learning a trade; he thought that these men yielded to temptation, but the inveterate sinners, the dissolute of both sexes, were sternly banished from his domains. Therein, as in all places where he commanded, he exacted discipline from his troops, and looked for fair dealing, temperance, and industry, among what we may call his people. His own daily habits were a bright example to all. He rose very early, summer and winter, and worked until

the sun had risen; then, going forth, inspected his military and other works; returning, he heard mass, and dined at half past ten in the forenoon, "putting much water in his wine." He talked freely at table, and said laughingly to a critical friend that he liked to babble nonsense himself because he could not patiently listen to the foolishness of other people. About midday he gave audience to all and sundry who chose to come; at four he withdrew to his study, where he was busy until supper-time, after which he spent some time with his family. Then he went to bed at nine, to rise at four in summer and six in winter—soldiers' hours, no doubt, but also the hours of a great and active man of business.

The defects of Marshal Fabert. Yes, he had his defects; but they injured no one except himself, and only in his worldly fortunes. I shall be content if I have conveyed some approximately correct conception of a hard-working, ingenious, valiant, and honest man, who, in essentials, is an example to all time; who had the good fortune to figure in youth as a printer and publisher of books—"Abraham Fabert, *le jeune*," may still be read on title-pages—and who, in old age, became a Marshal of France, the first of his class who attained to that splendid and coveted dignity, and one of the worthiest by whom it has ever been borne.

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